



FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**SUNDAY
WORSHIP
SERVICE
11:00 am**



“After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:11

Why Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh Were Given to Baby Jesus

As we all know from our nativity sets, some very special guests attended the birth of Jesus: wise men from the east, bearing gifts for the newborn king. Compared to the Bible's account of the royal visit, the story we tell is often padded with a bit of extra information. History and tradition have done their part to fill in the details regarding these visitors, including their number, names, and the timing of their arrival. One aspect of the visit that has largely escaped alteration is the list of gifts presented to Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. If you're wondering what use an infant would have for these gifts, you're not alone. The primary significance of the gifts lay in their great value—they were indeed gifts fit for a king. Beyond making it clear that these were great treasures given in an act of worship (Matthew 2:11), Scripture does not directly attach any other symbolic meaning to the gifts. These valuable gifts were clearly intended to honor Jesus, but it's possible they carried deeper theological significance as well.

The Gift of Gold

As was customary for royal visits, the wise men came bearing treasured gifts intended to honor the newborn king. And as it is today, gold was a valued commodity in the ancient world. Among the types of assets listed in the Bible (e.g., precious metals, livestock, servants, gemstones, etc.), accumulation of gold was one of the chief measures of wealth (cf. Genesis 13:2, Ecclesiastes 2:8). Because of its scarcity and immense value, gold was particularly associated with royalty and nobility, as is seen in 1 Kings 10 when the Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon bearing great quantities of gold as a gift. By bringing a gift of gold, the wise men showed that they did indeed consider Jesus a king. In addition to underscoring the royalty of Jesus, some have noted that the wise men's gift of gold may have foreshadowed another aspect of Jesus' ministry. Under the Old Covenant, the Most Holy Place (also known as the Holy of Holies) was an inner sanctuary within the Temple where the priest would encounter the presence of God and offer a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Likewise, the incarnation of Jesus heralded the presence of God—Immanuel—and the sacrifice of atonement he would make on behalf of his people when he went to the cross.

The wise men may have had this connection in mind because, as described in 1 Kings 6:20-22, the walls of the Most Holy Place and the altar within it were completely overlaid with—you guessed it—gold.

The Gift of Frankincense

Frankincense is an aromatic gum resin that is still widely used in parts of the Middle East and Africa today. It is produced by scraping the bark of certain native species of trees and then harvesting the beads of resin after they have dried. When burned as incense, it creates a strong and beautiful aroma. In the ancient near east, the cost of frankincense precluded it from being used as a common household air freshener. Rather, the burning of frankincense was closely associated with ceremonial worship of a deity. In this way, the inclusion of frankincense as a gift for Jesus may have indicated that the wise men understood that the prophecy of the newborn king carried with it a claim of deity. As with gold, frankincense may also have an implied connection with the Temple worship of the Old Covenant. Burning incense at the altar was a key part of the sacrificial system prescribed by God for use in the Tabernacle and, later, in the Temple itself. According to Exodus 30, however, not just any incense would do. A specific recipe of spices mixed with “pure frankincense” (v. 34) was to be consecrated as “pure and holy” (v.35) and was the only incense permitted at the altar. A speculative parallel can be drawn between this and Jesus’ life as a pure and holy offering to the Lord.

The Gift of Myrrh

Myrrh is a fragrant spice derived from the sap of a tree native to the Near East. Like frankincense, it can be used as incense, but in the ancient world it also had wider usage as a perfume, anointing oil, and was even imbibed as a medicinal tonic. Most notable with regard to Jesus’ life, myrrh was a key ingredient in the mixture of spices that were used to prepare bodies for burial (e.g., John 19:39-40). Perhaps the wise men intended this gift as an indication of Jesus’ humanity and the manner in which he would save his people—namely, that he would die for them (cf. Isaiah 53:5). Just like the first two gifts, there is a Temple connection with myrrh as well. Exodus 30 tells us that liquid myrrh was a main ingredient in the anointing oil used to ceremonially prepare the priests, the instruments, the altar, and the Temple itself before sacrifices could be made. Again, parallels to Jesus’ consecrated life and sacrificial death are immediately noticeable.

What did Mary and Joseph Do with the Gifts?

Isaiah 60:6 describes the wealth of the nations coming to God’s people through Christ. Mary and Joseph saw a glimpse of this when they received the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And in this case, that wealth was likely used to help the family escape to another nation. Matthew tells us that as soon as the wise men departed, an angel of the Lord came to warn Joseph of Herod’s rage (Matthew 2:13). Joseph was instructed to take refuge in Egypt, a journey of over 100 miles. For a family of humble means, a trip of this magnitude would be difficult to pull off. Though we don’t have a record of such, it is reasonable to think that the valuable gifts Mary and Joseph received from the wise men may have financed the family’s flight to Egypt.

Prayer Requests

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Isaiah 41 : 10

MARIANNE BALTROTSKY

TOM BAZAN

PATTY BLANK

BILLY BOWSER

RILEY BRANNAN

TRISH BRANNAN

CLARKE BURELL

BILL CLEM

BRYAN DINKLE

MARION DOUGHERTY

JOHN DREISONSTOK

ROGER FARBER

NOAH FINDLEY

BRADLEY FLOOK JR

ANGIE FORREST

SHARON GETZANDANNER

DOT GLASSCOCK

BOB GOEDERT

EMILIE GOEDERT

JERRY GOEDERT JR

MICK HARLEY

BOB HARTMAN

JERRY HAYES

LILLIE BELL HOBBS

GINNY HOUCK

ROBERT KALASKI SR

SARA KNIGHT

ANTHONY MAIN

MARY FRANCES MAIN

ROBERT MARSH

PEGGY MEEUWSEN

MARGARET PASLAWSKY

JERRY PENICK

DORIS PENROD

KATHY PETERS

BOBBY REMSBERG

FRANK SCOTT

PATRICIA SCOTT

DONALD SHOOK

GARY SMITH JR

MELVIN SMITH

BARBARA SNOOTS

SANDY SPENCER

LINDA TROPE

PATRICK VASOLD

BOB WARNER

ROBERT WASTLER

CALLIE WATKINS

JOEL WILCOX

BILL WISSMAN

HEATHER ZIMMERMAN



OUR IN-HOME MEMBERS

Margaret Sunday
301-304-0214

Donald Shook
301-898-4336

Bob Warner
240-490-5343

To **ADD** or **REMOVE** names to :

- *Prayer Requests*
- *Newsletter Mailing*
- *Birthday/ Anniversary*

Please contact Jennifer Stull
mychurch.js@gmail.com
301-788-1656



GREETER

Donald Shook

ORGANIST

Mary Frances Bostian

ACOLYTES

Kevin Sunday/Ashlee Sunday/Jim Bostian

USHERS

Bill Houck / Kevin Sunday / Jennifer Stull
Doug Sunday

ALTAR GUILD

Jim & Mary Frances Bostian, Carole

CHURCH TREASURERS

Jennifer Sunday / Shirley Bazan

BULLETIN + NEWSLETTER & MAILING

Jennifer Stull

HOMEWOOD Auxiliary Representative

Carole Houck

FELLOWSHIP MORNING

Jennifer Stull

CONSISTORY BOARD

Mary Catherine Martz, Calvin Woodward,
Carole Houck, Jim Bostian,
Jennifer Sunday, Jennifer Stull

PROPERTY / CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Carole Houck, Jim Bostian, Doug Sunday,
Bill Houck, Jennifer Stull

CHRISTMAS AFTERGLOW

By Erma Grove



As starlight gleamed when Christ was born,
And men brought gifts from afar;
Year after year each Christmas tree,
Is topped with a shining star.

As firelight warmed the shepherds there,
On the plain that holy night;
We watch the blazing yule logs burn,
And dream by fireplace light.

As candles illumed the manger,
Where the Infant Jesus lay;
So many decorations bright,
Of candles are made today.

We recognize the place of light,
All through the Christmas season;
But as soon as the holiday's done,
There's a darkness without reason.

Our giving seems to fade like stars,
Good cheer burns out with the fire;
Goodwill disappears like candles,
Darkness and evil conspire.

Why not all year a blaze of truth,
Our love for Jesus to show?
Let's lift a torch for right and peace,
In a Christmas afterglow!



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Faith United Church of Christ

Thank You

Thank you to **Bill and Bob Houck** for washing and cleaning the siding on the front of the Arcade and also the siding on the church's shed.

Thank you to **Carole and Bill Houck** for setting up and decorating the sanctuary Christmas tree.

Thank you to **Carole Houck** for cleaning up the flower beds around the church.

Thank you to **Bill Houck** for raking and then mowing up all the leaves around the church grounds.

Caring Sharing

Donald Shook will have surgery on his leg on January 5, 2021.

Bob Hartman is scheduled for surgery on December 14th.

Our thoughts and prayers for a quick recovery for both of them!

Prayers for our Marines Sgt Kyle Stull and Cpl Corey Sunday. We wish them a healthy and safe holiday season!



DEC 2 - DASTAN ZANGANAH
DEC 2 - BOBBY STANLEY
DEC 6 - MONTIE CLEM
DEC 8 - CAROLE HOUCK
DEC 8 - JOAN WOODWARD
DEC 15 - MARY FRANCES BOSTIAN
DEC 15 - MARGARET SUNDAY
DEC 18 - CPL COREY SUNDAY



DOUG AND JENNIFER
SUNDAY
DECEMBER 16



The next Consistory Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 13 @ 1:30 pm.

ALL SAINTS' DAY REMEMBRANCE

Thank you to Chad Weddle for leading this beautiful ceremony and lighting each candle for all of our loved ones at our November 1st worship service.





Thank you to **ALL** who have continued to support our community outreach food donation basket! The Christmas season is upon us and Food Banks are always looking to replenish their shelves. Thank you to **Jim and Mary Frances Bostian** for delivering the items to Thurmont Food Bank.

Items always needed:

PAPER PRODUCTS

CANNED GOODS

BOXED DINNERS

CEREAL

CLOSING POLICY

In the event of inclement weather, power outage, or any cancellation of worship service that may be necessary, we will use our current call list to contact all church attendees. If you have any questions, please contact

Mary Catherine Martz

240-315-5855

The Three Wise Women

You do know what would have happened if it had been three wise WOMEN instead of men, don't you?

They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and brought disposable diapers as gifts!



A Merry Christmas Prayer

"Lord, we ask You to grant us peace. Peace in our homes, peace in our churches and peace in our hearts, especially when it feels like the world all around us spins out of control.

Help us stay focused on You, this Christmastime and always. Thank You for loving the whole world enough to send the greatest gift, Your Son, so we might truly have a very merry Christmas, even in a not-so-merry kind of world. In Jesus' Name, Amen. "

Christianity.com

STRUGGLES STRUGGLES

THE BUTTERFLY

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly.

One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Until it **suddenly stopped making any progress** and looked like it was stuck.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man didn't think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But that didn't happen. The butterfly spent the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and a swollen body.

Despite the **kind heart of the man**, he didn't understand that the restricting cocoon and the struggle needed by the butterfly to get itself through the small opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings to prepare itself for flying once it was out of the cocoon.

Moral of the story:

Our **struggles in life develop our strengths**. Without struggles, we never grow and never get stronger, so it's important for us to tackle challenges on our own, and not be relying on help from others.

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

ROMANS 5 : 3-5

The Twelve Days of Christmas

D	P	L	A	D	I	E	S	J	I	A
L	O	A	S	W	A	N	S	C	X	H
U	O	V	R	T	R	R	I	Q	E	R
K	D	R	E	T	E	D	S	N	E	I
L	C	M	D	S	R	R	S	F	E	N
S	X	D	B	S	E	I	E	T	R	G
D	D	N	I	M	B	S	D	M	D	S
I	J	J	M	I	E	S	D	G	U	X
A	T	U	R	E	Y	J	E	B	E	D
M	R	D	G	L	E	G	Y	M	J	H
D	S	K	B	P	S	R	E	P	I	P

PARTRIDGE
DOVES
HENS

BIRDS
RINGS
GEESE

SWANS
MAIDS
LADIES

LORDS
PIPERS
DRUMMERS



A PARTRIDGE in a pear tree.
Two turtle DOVES
Three French HENS
Four calling BIRDS
Five golden RINGS
Six GEESE a-laying
Seven SWANS a-swimming
Eight MAIDS a-milking
Nine LADIES dancing
Ten LORDS a-leaping
Eleven PIPERS piping
Twelve DRUMMERS drumming