



9 AM Contemporary Service • Sunday, January 4, 2026

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Invitation to Worship

Ben Vergote

Leader: Christmas has come and gone. Our New Year celebrations are over. Yet, in the quiet of this continuing holy season, we remember that God's light does not fade when Christmas ends. The star still shines. The journey continues. We gather as people on the way—seeking, wondering, trusting—drawn by the promise that God's light guides us still.

All: **Come, let us worship the living God!**

Worship Songs - **"Firm Foundation (He Won't)"** **"God of Wonders"**

Greeting One Another in Christian Love

(Before you sit down, please turn and greet your neighbor. Also, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad located at the end of each pew and pass it along to the person next to you. Thanks!)

Epiphany Candle Lighting

Chad, Shannah, Ben and Nora Vergote

Reader 1: Throughout the season of Advent, leading up to Christmas, we lit candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, waiting for the coming of Christ.

Reader 2: On Christmas Eve, we lit the Christ Candle, celebrating that God's light has come into the world.

Reader 1: Today, on Epiphany, we remember the Magi, who followed a star and discovered that this light was for all people.

Reader 2: As we light these candles one final time in this season, we give thanks that Christ is revealed to us and still guides us by God's light.

(All candles are lit.)

All: **Light of Christ, shine in our hearts and in our world. Guide us in your ways, and send us out to reflect your light. Amen.**

Message to the Children

Shannah Vergote

(Children are invited to come forward at this time for the children's message.)

Scripture Readings – Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon

**"The Journey of the Magi:
God's Light Guides Us Still"**

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Song - **"Come Let Us Worship and Bow Down"**

Celebration of Communion

For Communion today everyone is invited to come forward by the center aisle to receive the gluten free bread and juice. After partaking of the elements, you may return to your seat by the side aisle.

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Giving Back to God

- Our Offering- Your gifts honor God and help provide financial support of the ministries and mission of this church.
- Our Service- Get connected! Fill out a Connection Card to get more involved in the life and ministries of the church.
- Our Prayers- How can we help you in prayer today? Fill out a prayer card and let us know. *Please place your financial gift, Connection Card, or Prayer Card in the Offering Box in the narthex.*

Closing Song

Charge

Leader: Go forth as people guided by God's light.
Seek Christ in unexpected places.
Walk new paths of faith and courage.
And share the light you have received with a world in need.

Benediction

Leader: May the light of Christ shine before you and guide your way.
May the love of God surround you on every journey.
And may the Holy Spirit lead you in peace,
now and always.

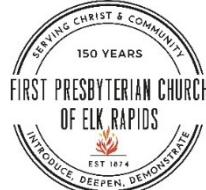
All: Amen.

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Lorraine Berak, our snack volunteer, and our coffee volunteer: Lorraine Berak.

Thank you to our communion servers: Laura Asiala, Lorraine Berak, Shelia Conrad, and Mel Matchett.



10:30 AM Traditional Service • Sunday, January 4, 2026

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Prelude – “Carol of the Kings” by Vader/Rouse

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Invitation and Centering Words

Christmas has come and gone. Our New Year celebrations are over. Yet, in the quiet of this continuing holy season, we remember that God's light does not fade when Christmas ends. The star still shines. The journey continues. We gather as people on the way—seeking, wondering, trusting—drawn by the promise that God's light guides us still.

Ringing of the Historic Church Bell

Call to Worship (Isaiah 60:1-6)

Sandi Gray

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
People: We come drawn by God's light, seeking hope in the midst of the world's shadows.
Leader: Nations shall come to the light, and kings to the brightness of God's dawn.
People: We follow the light of Christ, who leads us on paths of grace and truth.
Leader: Come, let us worship the One revealed to all peoples.
People: We come to worship, guided by God's light.

Opening Prayer

Sandi Gray

All: God of glory and grace, you revealed your light to the Magi through a star in the night sky, and you reveal your love to the world in Jesus Christ. As we gather in your presence, shine upon us with your wisdom and peace. Guide our worship, our listening, and our living, that we may follow where you lead and reflect your light to a world in need. We pray in the name of Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.

Opening Hymn 143 – “*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*”

Epiphany Candle Lighting

Choir

Reader 1: Throughout the season of Advent, leading up to Christmas, we lit candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, waiting for the coming of Christ.

Reader 2: On Christmas Eve, we lit the Christ Candle, celebrating that God's light has come into the world.

Reader 1: Today, on Epiphany, we remember the Magi, who followed a star and discovered that this light was for all people.

Reader 2: As we light these candles one final time in this season, we give thanks that Christ is revealed to us and still guides us by God's light.

(All candles are lit.)

All: Light of Christ, shine in our hearts and in our world. Guide us in your ways, and send us out to reflect your light. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Sandi Gray

All: Holy and gracious God, you call us to follow your light, yet we confess that we often choose familiar paths over faithful journeys. We resist change, fear the unknown, and turn away from places where your light leads us to grow. We confess that we sometimes hoard your gifts instead of sharing them with the world. Forgive us, O God. Realign our hearts, renew our trust, and set us again on the path of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(Please pause for prayers of silent meditation)

Assurance of Pardon

Sandi Gray

Leader: Hear the good news: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, restored, and set free. Friends, believe and receive the good news of the gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Passing of the Peace

Sandi Gray

Leader: The light of Christ has come into the world. May the peace of Christ shine upon you and dwell with you always.

All: The peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.

(Also, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad at the end of the pew and pass it along to those sitting beside you.)

Anthem – “*Wexford Carol*” arr. by Hagenberg

Scripture Readings – Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon "The Journey of the Magi: God's Light Guides Us Still" Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Hymn 151 – “*We Three Kings of Orient Are*”

Celebration of Communion

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Giving Back to God

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Doxology – “*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*”

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Offering Prayer

All: Generous God, as the Magi offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we bring these gifts in gratitude and trust. Receive what we offer—our tithes, our offerings, and our lives—and use them to reflect your light in a world longing for hope. May all that we give point others toward Christ, the true gift of your love. We offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Hymn 450 – “*Be Thou My Vision*”

Charge

Leader: Go forth as people guided by God's light.
Seek Christ in unexpected places.
Walk new paths of faith and courage.
And share the light you have received with a world in need.

Benediction

Leader: May the light of Christ shine before you and guide your way.
May the love of God surround you on every journey.
And may the Holy Spirit lead you in peace,
now and always.

All: Amen.

Benediction Response – “Let There Be Peace On Earth”

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers, our snack volunteer, and our coffee volunteer: Lorraine Berak.

Thank you to our communion servers: Betsy Argo, Ginny Dorner, Ken Kohlman, and Don Reynolds.

Thank you for your generous support! Your gifts help sustain the ministries and mission of our church. You can give by mail (404 Spruce St., Elk Rapids, MI 49629), online at www.erfpc.org (click "Giving"), or by contacting Treasurer Mike Husby at finmanager@erfpc.org. Thank you!

Nursery – Qualified caregivers welcome infants and children during the service.

Taking Down Christmas Decorations – Today

Following the 10:30 a.m. service today, we will be taking down the Christmas decorations. Everyone is invited to help—many hands make light work!

Season 5 of The Chosen is on its way! We'll be starting that series on Monday evenings beginning January 5th at 6:00 p.m. for 8 weeks. Please sign up at the Activity Center.

2025 Annual Reports Due Friday, January 9 –Ministry Teams and Group Chairpersons: It's time to begin preparing your Annual Report summarizing your 2025 activities. Please keep your report to one page, format it as a Word document, and email it to the church office (info@erfpc.org) by Friday, January 9, 2026. For questions, contact Ellen in the church office (231-264-8167).

Share Your Gifts in Worship! Do you enjoy singing, playing an instrument, or offering special music? Or are you more comfortable behind the scenes with tech and AV? We're looking for people to join our worship and tech teams! If you're interested or want to learn more, contact Kyle Ripley at 616-888-9788 or ksripley@gmail.com.

Alzheimer's & Dementia Caregiver Support Group – 3rd Friday of Each Month at 2PM

For those caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Share support, encouragement, and guidance in a welcoming environment. The group meets on the 3rd Friday of each month from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Please contact facilitator Kathy Dork at 248-568-4651 if you'd like to attend or if you have questions.

Resources for Grief Care – Stephen

Ministry offers one-on-one support and grief resources, including pamphlets and a display in the narthex. Information on local counseling options is also available. To meet with a Stephen Minister, please contact the office or a Stephen Minister directly.

Community Cupboard – Village Market

Community Cash starts September 1st and runs through May 31st. Save your receipts and drop them in the church donation box (lower left corner of the mail boxes in the Narthex) or mail them to PO Box 572, Elk Rapids, MI 49629. Those receipts help us purchase up to 3 months of food for our families. Thank you!

Thanks to feedback from a recent client survey, the Elk Rapids Community Cupboard is expanding its hours to ensure greater accessibility. It will now be open every other Saturday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., starting November 22. These new hours are in addition to existing hours every other week on Tuesdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. and Fridays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Visit elkrapidscommunitycupboard.com or call Pam Coleman at 847-445-8239 for more information.

Discover Your Gifts! Take our quick Volunteer Accelerator Survey

 to find where you can best serve. Scan the QR code or use the link: volunteeraccelerator.ministryarchitects.com/ERFPC/survey.html

Thanks for your willingness to help out!

LIVING ON - GENERAL LOSS GROUPS

The focus of Living On support groups is to express feelings and experiences related to the loss of a loved one in a supportive, caring, and non-judgmental environment. Grief and loss topics are addressed as they arise, depending on the interests of those attending the group.

1st Tuesday of the month 
6pm - 7pm
RSVP with Cindy Palmer
248-334-1323 • cpalmer@hom.org

2nd Tuesday of the month 
6pm - 7:15pm
Hospice of Michigan office
989 Spaulding Ave. SE, Ada
RSVP with Ryan Miller
616-356-5228 • rymiller@hom.org

1st Wednesday of the month 
5:30pm - 6:30pm
Hospice of Michigan office
199 Long Rapids Rd., Alpena
RSVP with Stacy Malenfant
989-358-4295 • smalenfa@hom.org

2nd Wednesday of the month 
11am - 12pm
Hospice of Michigan office
830 S. Otsego Ave. Gaylord
RSVP with Tavia Mulholland
989-705-2603 • tmulholland@hom.org

2nd Wednesday of the month 
1pm - 2:30pm
Hospice of Michigan office
932 N Mitchell St., Cadillac
RSVP with Will Gasper
231-444-3350 • wgasper@hom.org

4th Tuesday of the month 
10:30am - 11:30am
RSVP with Meredith Hartmann
734-709-3088
mhartmann@arborhospice.org

This Week's Activities

Sun. 1/4
9:00 a Contemporary Service
10:30 a Traditional Service

Mon. 1/5
6:00 p The Chosen

Tues. 1/6

Wed. 1/7
3:00 p Service at Autumn House
6:30 p Praise Team Pract.

Thurs. 1/8
7:30 a Men's Bible Study – AE
1:30 p Worship MT
7:00 p Trustees – FH

Fri. 1/9
Annual Reports Due
10:30 a Choir Rehearsal – FH