



# WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

Albany, New York  
January 5, 2025  
Service of Worship 10:00 am

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
Epiphany



Welcome to Westminster! We're glad you're here.

- **If you're visiting us this morning, we would love to meet you and greet you!** We invite you to fill out the Welcome Card in the pew and put it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher in the back.
- **After worship, please join us downstairs as we continue our fellowship at our coffee hour.** We gather in the hall located directly under the sanctuary. Stairs are located through the doors on either side of the front of the sanctuary, followed by another stairway that leads downstairs. Additional stairs and an elevator are available at the rear of the sanctuary. We recognize that our 19th century building can be confusing to navigate! **We are here to help**—please speak to an usher if you need assistance.



**WE ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME**

*(Let the notes of our Prelude be the musical curtain through which we pass as we gather to worship together.  
Let the preparation we make together be prayerful.)*

**Prelude** The Star, The Sky, The Promise Gilbert M. Martin

**Call to Worship** Gail Garrison

Leader: Arise, shine; for your light has come!

*Isaiah 60:1*

**All: The glory of God has risen upon us.**

Leader: Let us worship God!



**Opening Hymn #147**

The First Nowell (v. 1, 3, 5)



**Prayer of Confession**

Gail Garrison

Leader: God judges the nations with righteousness,  
and answers the poor with justice.

*Psalm 72:2*

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

**All: God of glory,  
you sent Jesus among us as the light of the world,  
to reveal your love for all people.  
We confess that our sin and pride  
hide the brightness of your light.  
We turn away from the poor;  
we ignore cries for justice;  
we do not strive for peace.**

**In your mercy, cleanse us of our sin,  
and pour out the gifts of your Spirit,  
that, forgiven and renewed,  
we may show forth your glory  
shining in the face of Jesus Christ.**

(Time of silence)

### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

Gail Garrison

Leader: The mercy of the Lord is like rain,  
like showers that water the earth.

*Psalm 72:6*

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Passing The Peace**

Gail Garrison

### **Words of Welcome**

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

## **WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD**



### **Prayer for Illumination**

One: Holy One, giver of all light, lift up our hearts and minds to Christ, the morning star that never fades. By the light of your Holy Spirit reveal to us your saving Word and lead us to offer our lives to you in service and in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



### **Scripture**

Matthew 2:1-12

read by Gail Garrison

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Sermon**

Looking For Patterns

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

**Prayer Hymn #151**

We Three Kings

(sing all stanzas; sing refrain only after stanzas 1,4,5)

**Gathering Celebrations and Concerns**

**Prayers of the People**

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

**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.**



**Invitation to the Offering**

Gail Garrison

**Offertory Music**

Cantilena

Lionel Lackey

**Hymn #607**

Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all people here below;  
praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

### **SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION**



**Invitation to Communion**

Led by Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff & Elder Leah Threatte

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy One,  
the beginning and the end,  
the giver of life:  
Blessed are you

for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you  
in the darkness and the light.  
Blessed are you  
for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you  
in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you  
for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

With thanksgiving, we remember how, when the hour had come,  
Jesus took his place at the table with the apostles.  
He said to them, I will not eat this Passover again  
until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Then Jesus took bread,  
and when he had given thanks,  
he broke it and gave it to them, saying,  
This is my body, which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

After supper, he took a cup, saying,  
This cup that is poured out for you  
is the new covenant in my blood.  
I will not drink of the fruit of the vine  
until the kingdom of God comes.

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word  
dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth  
in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.  
**All: Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God,  
we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.  
**All: Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



### Sharing Bread and Cup

Hymn #145

What Child Is This



### Prayer after Communion

Leader: Loving and gracious God,  
from east and west,  
from north and south,  
you have gathered us at your table,  
called us your beloved,  
and fed us from your body.  
Transform us to be your  
body in the world,  
and fortify us by your Spirit,  
so that we may serve you  
and our neighbors  
with great joy. **Amen.**

### WE ARE SENT IN GOD'S NAME



### Closing Hymn #127

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World)

**Benediction**

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

**Postlude**

Ce Jour De L'an (This New Year's Day)

Thomas Chesterton



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## 2025 CHURCH OFFICERS

### Session

*Leah Threatte, Clerk of Session*

2025: Ephraim Adjei, Peter McKee, Linore Southworth

2026: John Bossung, Kate Gallagher, Felicia Kollie-Gambles

### Deacons

*Mary Bullis and Dodie Seagle, Co-moderators*

2025: Kelly Crisfield, Carolyn Smith

2026: Mary Bullis, Marie McClumpha, Dodie Seagle

### Trustees

*John Bossung and Leif Hartmark, Co-chairs*

2025: John Bossung

2026: Pete Seagle, Dixon Southworth, Joy L. Tallmadge, Peter Wrede

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147

The First Nowell

1 The first Now-ell the an-gel did say was to cer-tain poor  
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin-ing in the  
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men  
 4 This star drew nigh to the north-west; o'er Beth - le -

shep-herds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keep-ing  
 east be - yond them far; and to the earth it gave  
 came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was their  
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop

their sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.  
 great light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.  
 in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.  
 and stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

Refrain

Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell,

"Nowell" is the English form of the French "noel," a shout of joy formerly used at Christmas (as in Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale"), a clue that the word is older than its first printing. It may have Latin and French roots related to "born" (*natus* / *nē*) as well to "news" (*nova* / *nouvelle*).

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

born is the King of Is - ra - el.

The image shows a musical score for the phrase "born is the King of Is - ra - el." It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff, aligned with the notes. The phrase is divided into four measures: "born", "is", "the King", and "of Is - ra - el." The word "Is" is hyphenated across two measures, and "ra - el." is also hyphenated across two measures.

- 5 Then entered in those wise men three, 6 Then let us all with one accord  
full reverently upon their knee, sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
and offered there in his presence that hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
their gold, and myrrh, and and with his blood our life hath bought.  
frankincense. *Refrain*

# 151 We Three Kings of Orient Are

1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing gifts we tra - verse a - far,  
 2 Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I bring to crown him a - gain,  
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;  
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom;  
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice:

field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er o - ver us all to reign.  
 prayer and prais - ing glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God Most High.  
 sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! sounds through the earth and skies.

*Refrain*

O star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

Although Christians had begun by the 2nd century to speak of these visitors from eastern countries (Matthew 2:1-12) as "kings," perhaps because of passages like Psalm 72:10 and Isaiah 60:3, it is more accurate to think of them as magi or astrologers, the scholars of their day.

607

# Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people

TEXT: Neil Weatherhogg, 1988  
MUSIC: Genevan Psalter, 1551  
Text © 1990 Neil Weatherhogg

OLD HUNDREDTH  
LM

SERVICE MUSIC

here below; praise Holy Spirit ever more;

praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

145

What Child Is This

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.

Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;  
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.  
 Raise, raise the song on high. The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.

# 127 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Jesus, the Light of the World

*With a gospel feel*

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing.  
 2 Joy - ful all you na - tions, rise. Je - sus, the  
 3 Christ by high - est heaven a - dored;  
 4 Hail, the heaven - born Prince of Peace!

light of the world. Glo - ry to the  
 Join the tri - umph  
 Christ, the ev - er -  
 Hail, the Sun of

new - born King,  
 of the skies. Je - sus, the light of the world.  
 last - ing Lord;  
 righ - teous - ness!

This blues-tinged setting of a familiar Christmas carol participates in a longstanding African American practice of adapting Anglo-European texts, as is done here by incorporating a repeated internal line and by appending a refrain that expands that line's language and imagery.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

Refrain

We'll walk in the light, beau - ti - ful light.

Come where the dew - drops of mer - cy shine bright.

O, shine all a - round us by day and by

night. Je - sus, the light of the world.