



FOR THE BEGINNING

— THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT —

**New Castle Presbyterian Church
Epiphany Sunday**

January 5, 2025

10:30 a.m.

GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

Prelude

**Welcome & Words about The Life and Work of the Church
Greeting of Peace**

As Jesus greeted his disciples, so let us greet one another:
The peace of Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

Steeple Bell

Call to Worship

How did you get here? **I walked, eyes looking up, following the star here.**
How did you get here? **I stumbled and struggled, surprised that I made it.**
How did you get here? **I moseyed like a river, caught up in God's flow.**
How did you get here? **I ran, desperate for God's gift.**

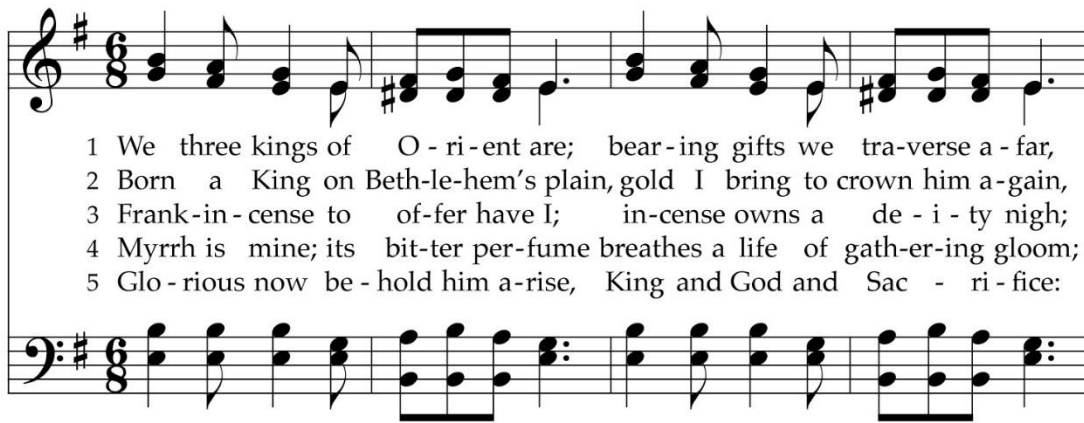
Welcome home. **We are here by God's grace.**

This is God's house; there is room for you here.

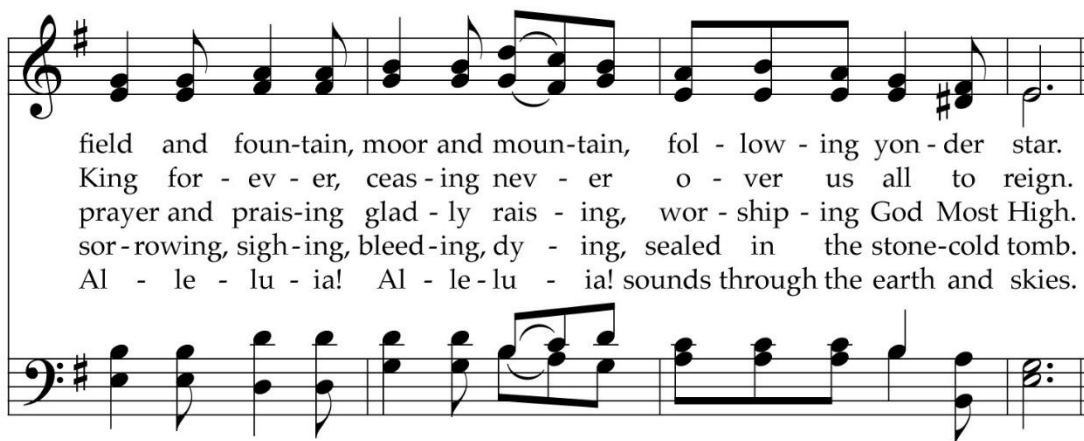
Let us worship God, who brings us together again and again.

***Hymn #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.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of new beginnings, we admit that we often follow the well-worn path, simply because others have been there before. But there are days when a new path needs to be cleared. On those new-beginning days, O God, give us the courage to follow your star. Give us the courage to go home by another way. Give us the courage to kick up some dust and walk in a new direction, for the sake of justice and mercy. Give us courage to follow in your way. O Lord, we believe. Help our unbelief...
(Time for silent prayer.)

Assurance of Pardon

Let us proclaim the Good News together:
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

***Response #155 Raise a Song of Gladness, sung twice**

**Raise a song of gladness, peoples of the earth.
Christ has come, bringing peace, joy to every heart.
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!**

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

Scripture Conversation with Children

Prayer for Illumination

God of starlight, we long to follow you. Like the Magi, we want to kick up dust with our feet and make a joyful ruckus following your guiding star. Illuminate our paths and draw our attention to your way. As you guided the Magi, guide us, O Lord. With hope in our hearts, we pray.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² 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.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ ‘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.’ ” ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ 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.” ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ 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. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Words for the Beginning: The Road Isn't Straight

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

Come to the Table of Grace

*Hymn #507

Capo 3: (D) F (A) C (Bm) Dm (D7/A) F7/C (G) B \flat

1 Come to the ta - ble of grace. Come to the

(A) C (D) F (A) C (D) F (Em) Gm

ta - ble of grace. This is God's ta - ble; it's

(D/A) F/A (G) B \flat (D/A) F/C (A7) C7 (D) F (G) B \flat (D) F

not yours or mine. Come to the ta - ble of grace.

- 2 Come to the table of peace...
- 3 Come to the table of love...
- 4 Come to the table of hope...
- 5 Come to the table of joy...

The simple, formulaic nature of this song makes it especially suitable for use during the communion portion of the Lord's Supper. Because it can be learned readily and does not require reference to a printed source, it frees people to sing before and after receiving the elements.

Offerings of Tithes and Gifts

Offertory

***Response #607**

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

***Prayer of Dedication**

O God, in a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start? In the commotion of our journey, help us to lace up our shoes and see your fingerprints in the world. With-us God, help us to see another way home. Bless our offerings that your grace would offer new beginnings to all who need it. Amen.

Communion and Prayers of the People

Invitation

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

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

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.**

Words of Institution

Partaking

Prayer

GO IN GOD'S NAME

*Hymn #152

What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright

Capo 2: (C) (Am) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G) (C) (F)
 D Bm A D G D A D G

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more
 2 'Tis now full-filled what God de-creed, "From
 3 While out-ward signs the star dis-plays, an
 4 O Je-sus, while the star of grace im-

(C) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G)
 D A D G D A

love-ly than the noon-day light? 'Tis
 Ja-cob shall a star pro-ceed;" and
 in-ward light the Lord con-veys and
 pels us on to seek your face, let

(Am) (D7) (G) (C) (F) (C) (Dm)
 Bm E7 A D G D Em

sent to an-nounce a new-born king, glad
 lo! the east-ern sa-ges stand to
 urg-es them, with ten-der might, to
 not our sloth-ful hearts re-fuse the

(G) (C) (G) (C) (F) (G) (C)
 A D A D G A D

ti-dings of our God to bring.
 read in heaven the Lord's com-mand.
 seek the giv-er of the light.
 guid-ance of your light to use.

This 18th-century Latin text calls attention to three kinds of light: the light of the star leading the Magi to the Christ-child, the inward light inspiring their journey, and Christ who is the Light of the world. The simple unison melody unites everything in a gentle arc.

*Charge and Benediction

Steeple Bell

Postlude

Please remain seated through the Postlude. As you exit, you may recycle your bulletin in the basket at the door. Join us after worship for Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall

Thank you for serving today:

Worship Leader: Toni Marley

Counters: Gail Seitz/Peter McCurdy

Communion: Peter McCurdy, Chris Fagles, Mike & Lynn Smith

Ushers: _____/_____

Coffee Hour: Deacons

Nursery: Jane Fouracre/Stephanie Foltz

Sunday School: Mallory Mackie/Molly Shaw

Today we remember in the Special Gifts Memorial Case:

Eleanor R. Shattuck
1886-1967

John Allen Wallace
1903-1993



Welcome to New Castle Presbyterian Church! Whether you are worshipping with us in-person or joining via livestream, we gather today as a community of faith, seeking and serving the God we know in Jesus Christ. May this worship service remind you that you are God's own and that together we are called to live out God's way of love, justice and peace.

Worship "code": * = please stand if able **bold** = all speak together

Sunday School and Nursery will be offered today. Children are invited to begin in worship; worship bags are available at the entrance. Following the Scripture Conversation, babies through four-year-olds may go to nursery; children age Kindergarten through 5th grade may go to Sunday School. All children must have an information form on file. Please see an usher for a copy of the form or if you have any questions.

At the end of worship, please join us for Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall.

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER ON A SUNDAY MORNING

➡ We are in **need** of ushers in January! ⬅

Please sign up today: <https://www.newcastlepreschurch.org/on-line-signups>

YOUNG-ISH WOMEN'S - TODAY

Our fellowship group for women between the ages of ~25 and 50 will gather for lunch from 12-2pm at the Mercury on Delaware Street. Let Pastor Miriam know if you're able to attend or would like to be included on the list for future gatherings.

EPIPHANY STAR WORDS

On Epiphany, we remember when God used a star to guide magi to the Christ Child. Our modern Star Word practice is an invitation to consider how God still helps us see Jesus. Whatever word you draw (even if it doesn't seem like a good fit!), you're invited to keep it on hand during this year and prayerfully consider how God is comforting, challenging, or calling you through this star word.

NCPC YOUTH GROUP – JANUARY 12

Middle and high school youth! We'll gather on January 12 from 11:30 to 2 for a musical celebration in the Meeting House. As we learn about the sacrament of Communion, we'll also share our musical gifts with one another. *If you have a musical instrument, please bring it that day!* (And bring a favorite piece of music to share!) We'll have plenty of percussion instruments that we can all make a joyful noise together! If you are a youth or know a youth interested in participating, contact Pastor Miriam to RSVP.

ALL-AGES SUNDAY SCHOOL – JANUARY 19

Our All-Ages Sunday school this month will be a card-writing project. Come craft notes sharing Jesus' good news – Jesus loves me, and Jesus loves you!

JANUARY BOOK STUDY



January can be a difficult and dreary month. So, in the hope of the resurrection, we face death head on and explore what it means to live as dusty creations of God. NCPC's Book Club will be reading *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* by Kawaguchi. (Copies are available for \$10 in the Church Office.)

We'll have two opportunities to discuss the book - at Noon on Sunday, January 26, as well as at 3pm on Wednesday, January 29. Come grow in hope that in life and in death, we belong to God!

SECOND STREET COFFEEHOUSE: OPEN MIC NIGHT

A huge shout out to NCPC neighbors James and Charlottie Eoppolo for launching the amazing Second Street Coffeehouse in 2024! Since February, this monthly Open Mic Night has raised over \$3,300 for Friendship House, and just as incredibly, this gathering has connected our creative community. Kudos to the many talented participants, faithful audience members, and incredible volunteers who make this New Castle phenomenon happen. Make a New Years resolution to check out the next Second Street Coffee house at 6:30 on January 19 in our Fellowship Hall.

CODE PURPLE

First & Central Presbyterian welcomes Wilmington's unhoused neighbors into their social hall every Saturday during the winter. NCPC's Mission and Outreach committee invites you to sign up at <https://shorturl.at/X6Vyd> or contact Amy Selheimer.

Prayer List:

To place a name on the confidential Prayer Chain, contact Susan Flook, 302-328-7346 <mailto:suzieflook@hotmail.com> or Fran Ginger, 302-994-5988 <mailto:silverfran@aol.com>

Continuing Care Homes / Hospitals:

Rod Denison

Coral Springs Healthcare Ctr.
505 Greenbank Rd., Room C7
Wilmington, DE 19808

Linda Twyford

New Castle Nursing & Rehab
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New Castle, DE 19720
(302) 328-2580

Mary Duncan

HarborChase of Wilmington
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USCG MST 01-25
PO BOX 6719
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On Assignment with the Air Force:

James Boyle
1150 Bole Street,
Unit 54
JBPHH, HI 96860

This Week's Schedule

SUNDAY	1/5	10:30am	In-Person & Live Stream Worship & Communion
		11:30am	Coffee Hour
Monday	1/6		Brownies Due
Tuesday	1/7	9:15am	Emmanuel Dining Room Prep
		11:00am	Staff Meeting
		5:30pm	Mission & Outreach Committee Mtg
		7:00pm	Session Meeting
Wednesday	1/8	3:00pm	Bible Study
		7:30pm	Choir
Thursday	1/9	7:00pm	Celebration Ringers
Saturday	1/11	8:00am	Tai Chi
SUNDAY	1/12	10:30am	In-Person & Live Stream Worship
		11:30am	Coffee Hour

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Mallory Mackie, Sunday School Coord.

Eileen Larkin, Dir. of Music

Dan Knox, Treasurer

Minerva Lermond, Dir. of Handbells

Lyn Briggs, Recording Secretary

Bethany Faiz, Accompanist