FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Worship Service
Epiphany Sunday

January 4, 2026

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE Toccata on "Amazing Grace" J. Christopher Pardini

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the dark of morning,
the stars still shine.
In the depth of winter,
the birds still climb.
At the start of the year, tender and new,
God is here. God is near.
Do not rest in your fear.
God is here.
like the stars and the birds,
Let us worship holy God.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN #411
Arise, Your Light Is Come! FESTAL SONG

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Ever-loving God, we long for Christmas to usher in a season of peace and joy. However, we know that is not how the world works. Even just days after Christmas, we find ourselves face to face with fear once again. So today we pray—forgive us when we allow fear to stop us in our tracks. Forgive us when our own fear prevents us from following your call. Forgive us when fear is louder than love. Show us how to turn our fear into action. Show us how to live like the magi who searched for you in a fearful world. With hope we pray, Amen.

*Please stand if you are able.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Family of Faith, whether you are brave and courageous or fearful and timid, God's love for you knows no end. So join me in these words of forgiveness:
Whether fear inspires us to action, or stops us dead in our tracks, God's love for us is boundless. We are seen. We are surrounded with grace. We are sent to serve. Thanks be to God! Amen.

WE LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6 Barbara Hjorth

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18

Leader: The word of the Lord;

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Rev. Karen Kinney

"The Stars Still Shine"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

Consider these questions: Will we move the way fear makes us move? Or will we move the way love calls us to?

*SERMON HYMN

We've Seen God's Face (from *A Sanctified Art* – see insert) W ZLOBIE LEZ

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and *still* we believe. We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people. So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news. We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: *Unto us, love is born.* We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So *still*, we believe. Amen.

MINUTE FOR MISSION AND OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory Andante tranquility, Sonata No. Three for Organ Felix Mendelssohn

*Doxology #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow OLD HUNDREDTH

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Great Thanksgiving

People of Advent, the Lord be with you

And also with you!

People of Christmas, lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts overwhelmed with hope and joy.

People of the Star, offer your songs of joy and thanksgiving to God.

We will sing our praises to the One who has revealed glory and hope in the Babe of Bethlehem.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God: We look to you and we are radiant; we thrill and rejoice as shine, for your glory has risen upon us. Therefore, we will join our voices with the wise ones, as well as the foolish, of every time and place who forever sing of your grace:

Holy, holy, holy, God of bright dawns!
All creation renders tributes of praise to you.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the One who saves the lives of the needy.
Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is Jesus Christ, our Savior: With the ancient Magi, we come to pay him homage; we give him the treasures of our hearts, our lives. As his star shines down upon us, we are overwhelmed with joy. And, as we remember his birth, as we prepare to journey with him this year, we speak of that mystery called faith, which is revealed to us through Christ:

Christ came, the morning star of love;
Christ died, the night star of salvation;
Christ arose, the radiant star of resurrection;
Christ will come again, the constellation of hope.

Holy One of stars and sinners, send down your Spirit of hope upon those gathered around this Table, and on the gifts of the bread and the cup, that they might make us your faithful and loving children. Feed us with the bread of hope, so when we leave, we will travel another road, to defend the weak, to speak for the voiceless, to assist those cast aside. Refresh us with the sweet nectar of grace, so we, overwhelmed with joy, would go forth to enter the houses of the strangers in our midst; to enter the despair of the lonely and forgotten; to enter the hearts of everyone we meet. We think of those on our prayer list especially lifting up…

And when eternity's time begins and we are gathered around your Table, with friends and family we loved, with those we ignored and mistreated, with all our siblings of grace, we will lift our songs of glad joy to you, God in Community, Holy in One. Now we join our voices together to pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray.

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

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Unison Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks, O God, for the gifts of this table - precious, prayerful, and poignant - like gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Lead us forth by your light to share the gifts of your grace with all people everywhere, giving glory, honor, and praise to Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

*SENDING HYMN #68

What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright PUER NOBIS NASICUTUR

*BENEDICTION

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with - go in peace and be not afraid. Amen.

POSTLUDE Psalm XIX Benedetto Marcello

You're welcome to stay and enjoy the Postlude or to depart while the music is played.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

We've Seen God's Face

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY 8.7.8.7.8.8.7.7

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025
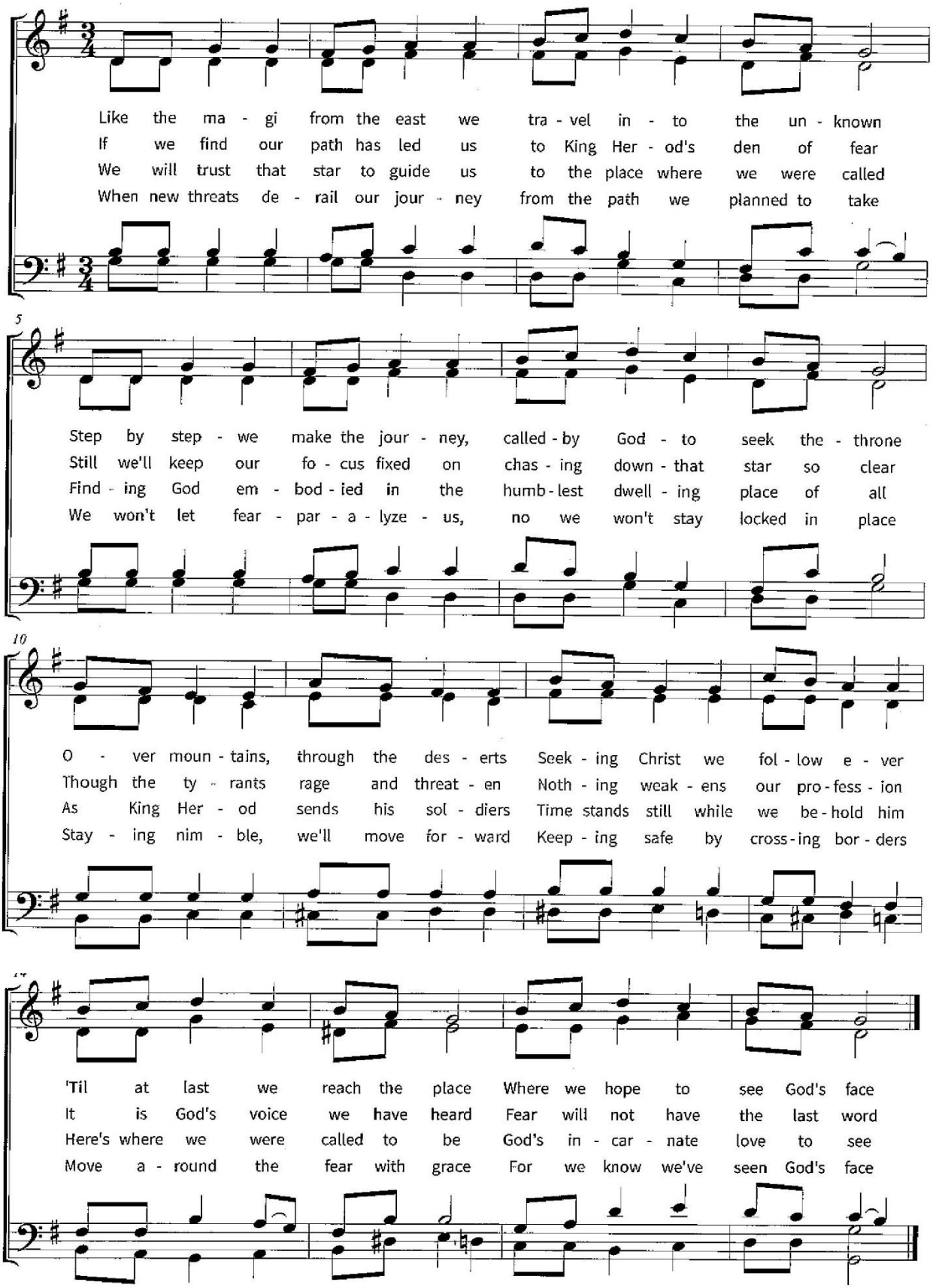
Traditional Polish carol

