

**Prelude Reflection:** *a haiku for today's worship*

Starlit path they tread,  
Magi bring gifts to adore,  
Hope in manger's bed.

**Prelude:** "Jesus, Lead Thou On" - Paul Manz

**Tolling of Bell:** *Bell tolled by the children of First Church*

**Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing:** *Based on 2 John 1:3*

Grace, mercy, and peace to you in the name of the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

**Call to Worship:** *Adapted from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship*

Votum: Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and  
earth. **Amen.**

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord for God has been revealed  
amongst us!

**People: O God, make us like the Magi who look for the sign of  
the Divine.**

Leader: We were people who once lived in the shadows,

**People: But like the Magi who saw the star, we see your glorious  
light!**

Leader: Come. Let us consider what wondrous things God has done:

**People: For the Christ who embodies the Word unveils all that is  
true and good and beautiful.**

Leader: Like the Magi who worshiped at Jesus' feet, let us worship  
the Lord!

**\*Opening Hymn:** *Come, Worship God* GTG #386

### **Prayer of Confession:**

God of all creation, we confess to dismissing valuable insights from outside our preferred point of view. When we do so, it's as if we turn away the Magi just because they don't follow you like we do. Open us to Your good wisdom that can come from unexpected sources, instill in us the hospitality of the soul to receive truth in unconventional ways, and empower us to see the Magi's story as an inspiration for us to embrace goodness from wherever it may come. Amen.

*Time of silence*

### **Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law:**

Hear these words of good news from the Apostle Paul: "Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible...all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Friends of Christ, because Christ made the world and holds it all together, let us be set free from our own narrow perspectives, and find Christ in the most unexpected mangers.

### **\*Passing the Peace:**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us greet one another with a hand-sign of peace.

Touch your thumb to the tip of your ring finger, and wave to one another. This hand-sign makes Christ's gesture of blessing in a lot of iconography in the Orthodox Tradition.

## **Children's Message & Blessing**

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

**Jesus Christ, light of the world, illuminate our hearts and minds today, and lead us on the journey of goodness. Amen.**

### **First Scripture Reading:** Genesis 15:1-6

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord, and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **Sermon Text:**

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.

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ!**

**Sermon:** A Starlit Scandal

**A Prayer of Blessing on the Word**

**\*Hymn of Response:** *As the Magi Scanned the Heavens* (scan)

**Profession of Faith:** *Belgic Confession: Article 1 – The Only God*

**We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths  
that there is a single and simple spiritual being, whom we call God—  
eternal, incomprehensible, invisible,  
unchangeable, infinite, almighty;  
completely wise, just, and good,  
the overflowing source of all good.**

**Tithes & Offerings:** *If you would like to connect more with the life and mission of First Church, please fill out a Welcome Card found in your pew and place it in the offering as it goes by.*

**Offertory:** "Choral" - Flor Peeters

**\*Doxology:** #592 in pew hymnal

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

**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.**

**\*Sending Hymn:** *All Who Love and Serve Your City* GTG #351

**\*Charge & Blessing**

Friends of Jesus Christ, may it be so, that  
All who love and serve this city,  
all who bear its daily stress,  
all who cry for peace and justice  
Do so with harmony and friendship.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

**Postlude:** "Postlude on the Tune "Westminster Abbey" - Harold Rutz

Note: Please plan to come to the Congregational Meeting next Sunday after worship.

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## Come, Worship God

(Psalm 95)

1 Come, wor - ship God, who is wor - thy of hon - or;  
 2 Ruled by your might are the heights of the moun - tains;  
 3 We are your peo - ple, the sheep of your pas - ture;  
 4 Now let us lis - ten, for you speak a - mong us;

en - ter God's pres - ence with thanks and a song!  
 held in your hands are the depths of the earth.  
 you are our Mak - er, and to you we pray.  
 o - pen our hearts to re - ceive what you say.

You are the rock of your peo - ple's sal - va - tion  
 Yours is the sea, yours the land, for you made them,  
 Glad - ly we kneel in o - be - dience be - fore you;  
 Peace be to all who re - mem - ber your good - ness,

to whom our ju - bi - lant prais - es be - long.  
 God a - bove all gods, who gave us our birth.  
 great is the one whom we wor - ship this day!  
 trust in your word, and re - joice in your way!

# AS THE MAGI SCANNED THE HEAVENS

David Bjorlin

KAS DZIEDAJA

Latvian melody



1. As the Ma - gi scanned the heav - ens look - ing  
2. As the Ma - gi made their jour - ney though their  
3. As the Ma - gi sought out wis - dom in a  
4. As the Ma - gi found their Sav - ior in a

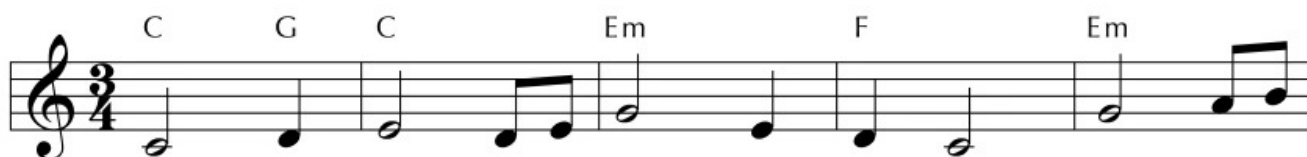


for a cos - mic sign, give us faith to search cre -  
end re - mained un - clear, guide us down the un - known  
strange and for - eign land, lead us out be - yond our  
help - less ba - by's face, give us eyes to see your

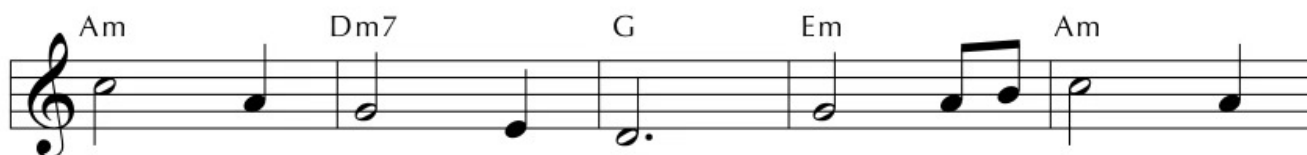


a - tion for a glimpse of truth di - vine.  
high - ways, choos - ing won - der o - ver fear.  
com - fort in our quest to un - der - stand.  
glo - ry in the most un - like - ly place.

# All Who Love and Serve Your City 351



1 All who love and serve your cit - y, all who  
 2 In your day of wealth and plen - ty, wast - ed  
 3 For all days are days of judg - ment, and the  
 4 Ris - en Lord, shall yet the cit - y be the



bear its dai - ly stress, all who cry for  
 work and wast - ed play, call to mind the  
 Lord is wait - ing still, draw - ing near a  
 cit - y of de - spair? Come to - day, our



peace and jus - tice, all who curse and all who bless:  
 word of Je - sus, "You must work while it is day."  
 world that spurns him, of - fering peace from Cal - vary's hill.  
 judge, our glo - ry. Be its name "The Lord is there!"

## 9Up Schedule

Brielyn has volunteered to be the main teacher while Kathleen is out – thank you, Brielyn!  
Please consider jumping in and helping her out! (Contact Rev. Trey to volunteer.)

January 28, 2024	Monica Marsh
February 11, 2024	<i>Help Needed</i>
February 18, 2024	<i>Help Needed</i>
February 25, 2024	<i>Help Needed</i>

### Next Week's Calendar:

#### Mon Jan 22, 2024

- 9am - 11:30am, Food Pantry
- 9am - 5pm, Boundaries Awareness Training  
(Regional Synod of Albany, Camp Fowler)

#### Tue Jan 23, 2024

- 12pm - 1pm, Adult Book Study on Zoom
- 6:00pm, FOCUS Board Meeting

#### Wed Jan 24, 2024

- 9am - 11:30am, Food Pantry
- 12pm - 1pm, AA Meeting
- 12pm - 12:30pm, Centering Prayer

#### Thurs Jan 25, 2024

- 11:30am - 1pm, Soup & Sandwiches In The Park

#### Sun Jan 28, 2024

- 10am - 11am Worship Sanctuary
- 11:15am, Congregational Meeting

# Worship Schedule for Lent & Easter

(Worship services are at 10am in the Sanctuary, unless otherwise specified)

Ash Wednesday Feb. 14, 2024	Ash Wednesday	Ash Wednesday 12pm Worship in Chapel
Feb. 18, 2024	First Sunday in Lent	Lectionary Texts
Feb. 25, 2024	Second Sunday in Lent	Lectionary Texts
Mar. 3, 2024	Third Sunday in Lent	Women in the Bible: Naomi
Mar. 10, 2024	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Women in the Bible: Deborah
Mar. 17, 2024	Fifth Sunday in Lent	Women in the Bible: Esther
Mar. 24, 2024	Palm Sunday	We process with Palms like those in Jerusalem to begin Holy Week.
Mar. 28, 2024	Maundy Thursday	Service at 7pm in Sanctuary
Mar. 29, 2024	Good Friday	Capital Area Council of Churches Noon Service, Location TBD
Mar. 30, 2024	Holy Saturday	Details TBD
Mar. 31, 2024	Easter Sunrise Service	FOCUS Easter Sunrise Service at West Capital Park at 6:30am
Mar. 31, 2024	Easter Sunday	10am; We receive new members

# Second Hour Schedule for Epiphany, Lent, & Eastertide

(Events held downstairs in the Chapel or Zimmerman Hall after Coffee Time for 30-45 minutes)

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Gathering:</u>	<u>Details:</u>
Jan. 21, 2024	Board of Trustee Board Mtg.	Board of Trustee Board Mtg.
Jan. 28, 2024	Congregational Mtg.	Congregational Mtg.
Feb. 4, 2024	Epiphany Series Liturgical Elements: Cross & Candle	Learn about the new elements we are adding to worship
Feb. 11, 2024	Epiphany Series Liturgical Elements: Bible & Bread/Cup	Learn about the new elements we are adding to worship
Feb. 18, 2024	Movements of Worship Series: What Is Worship?	<b>TBD:</b> In our world, “worship” can seem odd. What is it?
Feb. 25, 2024	Movements of Worship Series: Our Approach to God	△ Blessing, Votum, Call, Confession, Assurance, Peace.
Mar. 3, 2024	Movements of Worship Series: God’s Approach to Us	Illumination, Word Proclaimed (invisible), Word Made Visible.
Mar. 10, 2024	Movements of Worship Series: Our Response to God	Profession of Faith, “Thanksgiving” Cong. Prayer, Vocation, Blessing.
Mar. 17, 2024	New Members’ Second Hour: Get to know First Church	Officers, groups, and initiatives talk about their ministry at First.
Mar. 24, 2024	New Members’ Second Hour: Get to know the new members	We get to know those who are formally joining First.
Mar. 31, 2024	Easter Sunday: Easter Egg Hunt	Come on a wonderful hunt for Easter eggs!
Apr. 7, 2024	<i>Call To Discipleship</i> Series: Ch.1&2	Karl Barth discusses how grace is also a command.
Apr. 14, 2024	<i>Call To Discipleship</i> Series: Ch.3	Karl Barth discusses how we are bound to the one who calls us.
Apr. 21, 2024	<i>Call To Discipleship</i> Series: Ch.4	Karl Barth discusses what it might mean to take a step in faith.
Apr. 28, 2024	<i>Call To Discipleship</i> Series: Ch.5	Karl Barth discusses that we need to make a break with the world.