THE *Episcopal* CHURCH OF *St. John the Baptist*

"Where All Are Welcome . . . No Exceptions!"

The Epiphany

January 4, 2026

The Holy Eucharist

The Word of God

Prelude

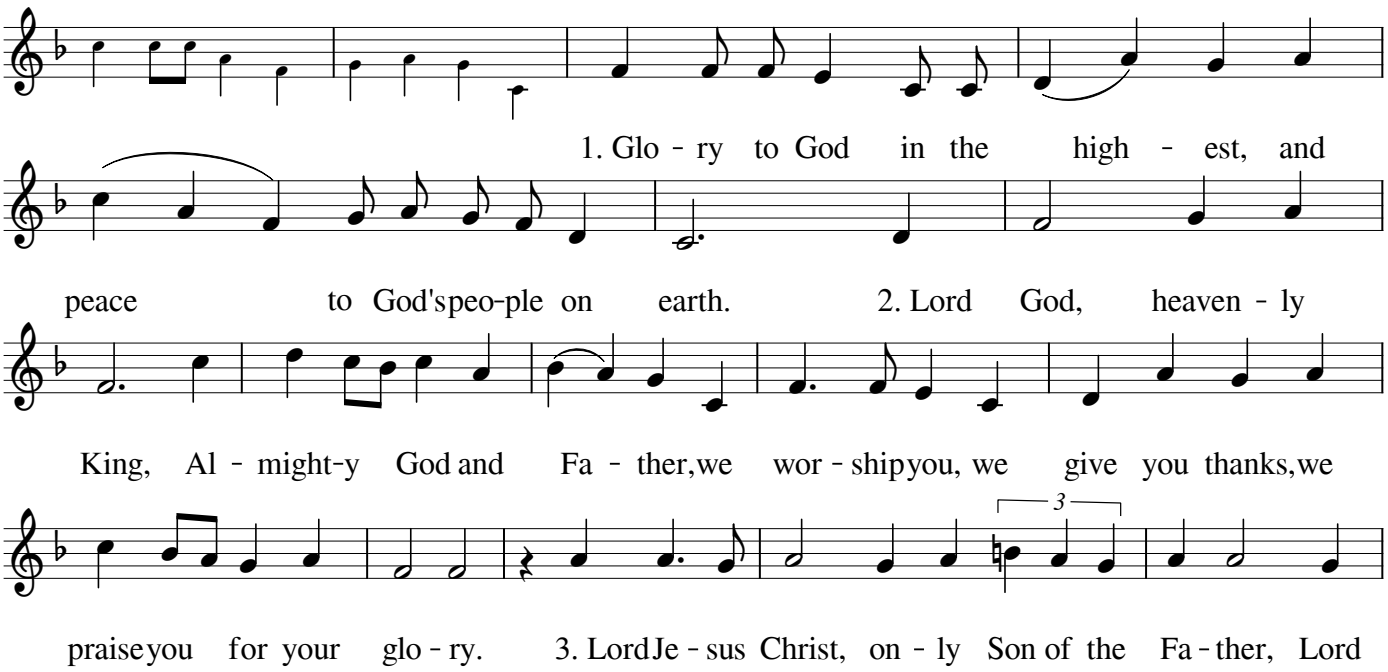
Processional Hymn *(Please stand as able)* *Please see page 9* **#117** | ***"Brightest and Best of the Stars"***

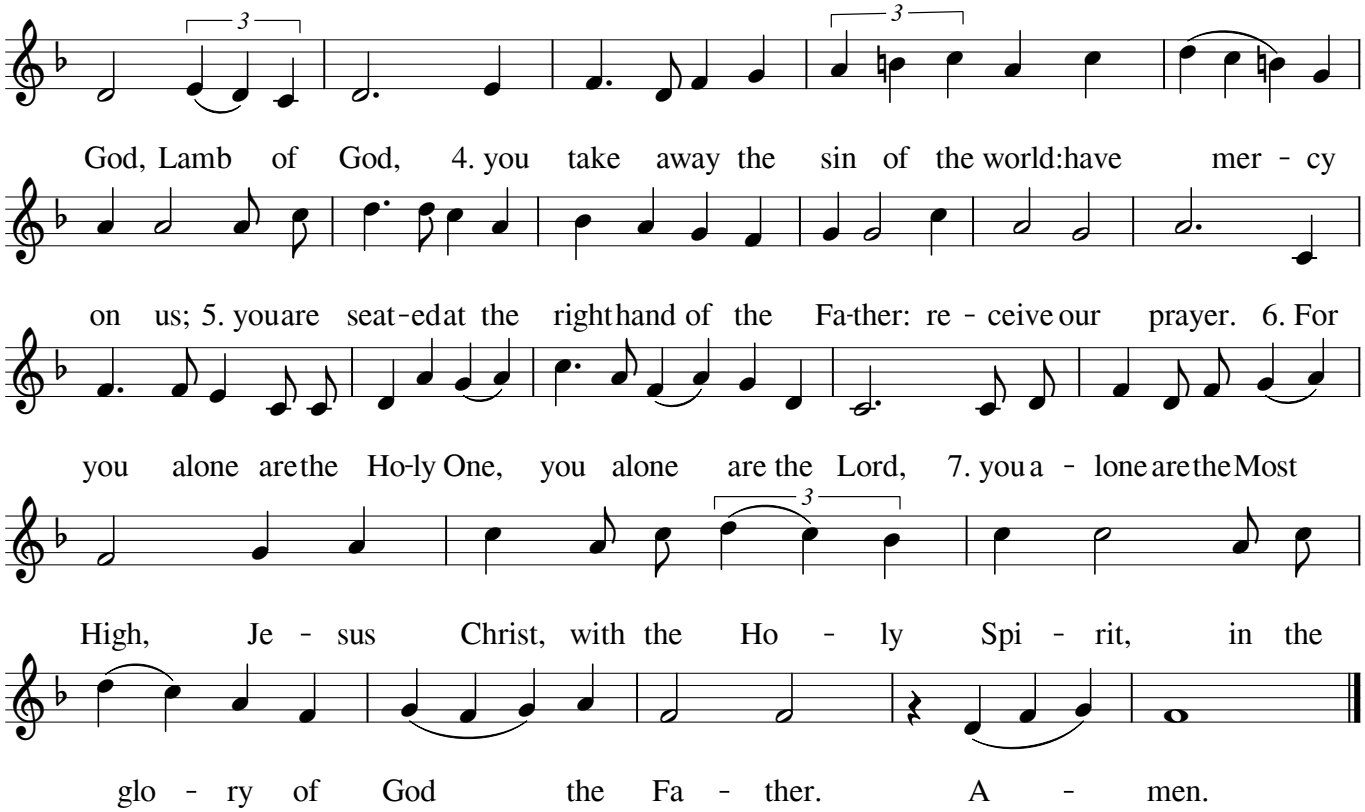
Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People ***And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.***

Celebrant Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

Canticle of Praise: *Glory to God* *Hymnal S280*





The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People ***And also with you.***
Celebrant Let us pray.

The Celebrant prays the Collect

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People ***Amen.***

First Reading (*Please be seated)*

Reader A Reading from Isaiah:

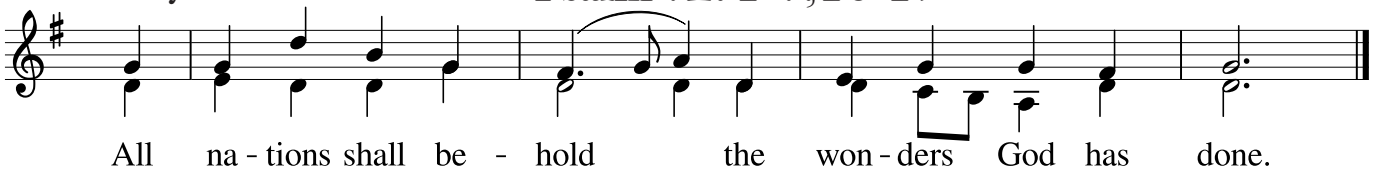
Introduction to the First Reading

Isaiah envisions the end of exile for God's people and the glorious restoration of Jerusalem. Although darkness covers the earth, the Lord will be a light making God's people shine. To this radiance shall come the nations.

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalm of the Day **Psalm 72: 1-7,10-14**

Give the King your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the King's Son;
That he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;
That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the little hills bring righteousness. [ANT.]

He shall defend the needy among the people;
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.
He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
He shall come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.
In his time shall the righteous flourish;
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon
shall be no more. [ANT.]

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute,
and the kings of Arabia and Saba offer gifts.
All kings shall bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service. [ANT.]

For he shall deliver the poor who cries out in distress,
and the oppressed who has no helper.
He shall have pity on the lowly and poor;
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.
He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence,
and dear shall their blood be in his sight. [ANT.]

Second Reading

Reader A Reading from The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians:

Introduction to the Second Reading

Paul, in prison and near the end of his ministry, proclaims that in Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.

Ephesians 3:1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People ***Thanks be to God.***

Sequence Hymn *(Please stand as able) - Please see pages 10-11* **#109 | *"The First Nowell"***

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew:
People ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

The Holy Gospel *(The Gospel is carried into the congregation so that we remember it is our Good News to hear and to share.)*

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, 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 wise men 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 at its rising, 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.

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People ***Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

THE SERMON

The Nicene Creed *(Please stand as able)*

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Please be seated)

Anthem - ***"Creator of Beauty and Giver of Light"*** *Text: Beverly Easterling & Music: Mark Schweizer*

(Please stand as able)

The Prayers of the People *The Leader and People pray responsively.*

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Almighty God, grant to your Church wisdom. Work through us that we might lead many to the knowledge and love of you.
Lead us to your presence;

Let us see your glory.

Defend the needy, Lord Christ. Rescue the poor and thwart all the ways of oppression. Lead us to your presence;
Let us see your glory.

The heavens reveal your wonders, O God. Give us eyes to see, hearts to follow, and lives that pay you homage.
Lead us to your presence;
Let us see your glory.

Bless all students as they return to school and university. May they find wisdom as well as knowledge; give them a hunger for your truth. Lead us to your presence;
Let us see your glory.

Loving God, you are the help of the helpless and the deliverer of those in distress: bless and heal all those in need.
Lead us to your presence;
Let us see your glory.

Great redeemer, you have guided us to your presence; you have shown us your glory. Grant us, that we might at last, see you face to face. Lead us to your presence;
Let us see your glory.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others, especially remembering those on our parish prayer list and those we name in our hearts.

(The congregation may add their own petitions either silently or aloud after the prayer list is read.)

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

(The Celebrant may add a concluding Collect.)

The Confession of Sin *(Please kneel as able or be seated)*

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. *(Silence may be kept)*

People ***Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.***

The Absolution

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. ***Amen.***

The Peace *(Please stand as able)*

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People ***And also with you.***

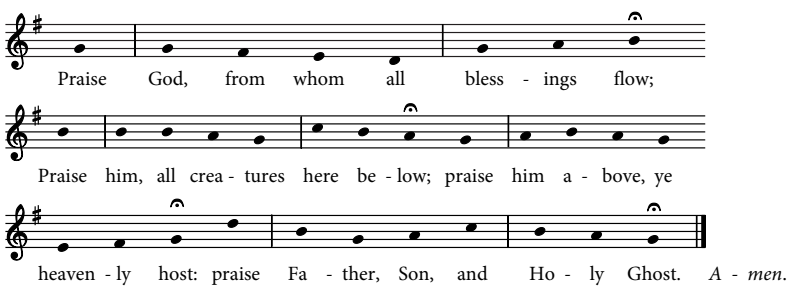
The Holy Communion

Being seated, we begin with a time of offering, giving money as a sign that our life serves God's purposes and showing our gratitude for God's many blessings.

Your faithful tithes and offerings are much needed and can be sent to:
The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist, PO Box 441, Milton, DE 19968 OR
Securely online through our website – https://www.stjohnthebaptistmilton.org/give.html

Offertory Sentence

Doxology *(The offering is presented as the Doxology is sung. Please stand as able)*



WORDS: Isaac Watts (1674-1748). Music: Louis Bourgeois, c. 1510–1561.

Offertory Hymn *Please see page 12* **#124 | *"What Star Is This"***

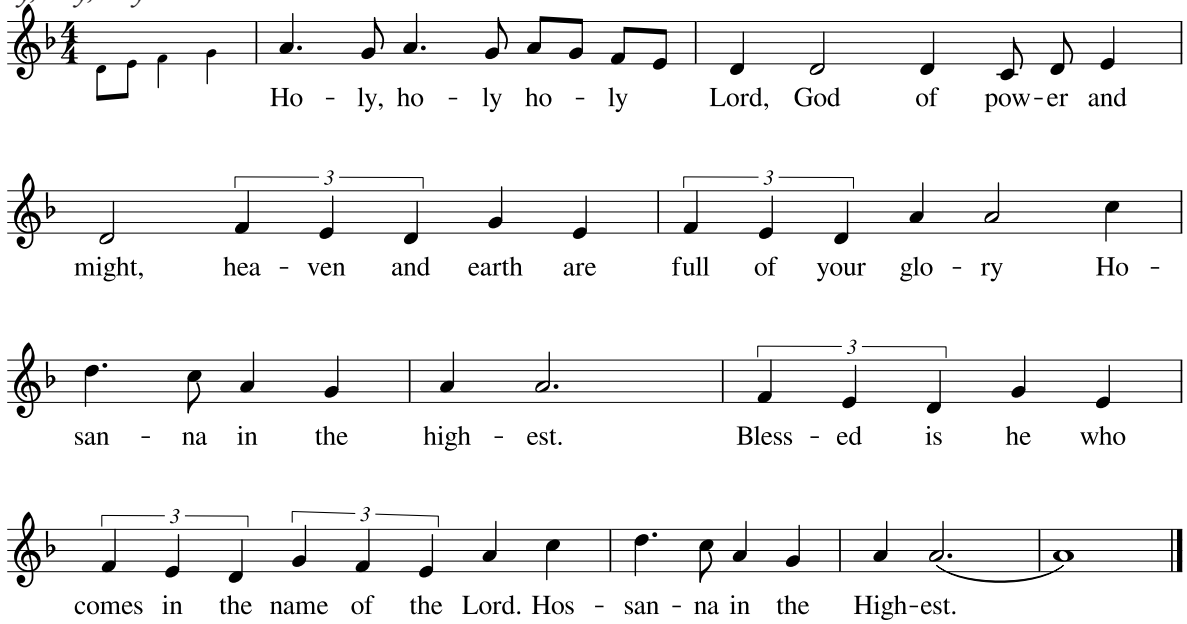
The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer B

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

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus: *Holy, holy, holy Lord* *Hymnal S129*



The people may kneel as able, or be seated. The Celebrant continues.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or to lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues.

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by

the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with [and] all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.
Amen.

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

People
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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People ***Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!***

Post Communion Prayer *(Please kneel or be seated)*

Celebrant Let us pray.

People
Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction *(Please stand as able)*

Recessional Hymn *(Please stand as able)* *Please see page 13* **#119 |** ***"As with Gladness Men of Old"***

The Dismissal

Celebrant Rise, shine, for your Light has come.
People ***Thanks be to God.***

Postlude

We warmly welcome the Rev. Terrence O'Connor, Jr. as our new Priest-in-Charge!

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The Rev. Terrence O'Connor, Jr., Priest-in-Charge
Bel Gwiazdowski, Eucharistic Minister
Jim Greenwell, Acolyte
Theo Leithmann, Lay Reader
Rebecca Frankum, Cantor
Tracy Howland, Usher
Bonnie Kuhn, Minister of Music
Scott Kresge, Minister of Technology & Parish Administration
Elizabeth Scheer, Jim Mulholland, Susan Mattia, Technology Ministry
Jean Skocypec, Gerri Reuter, & Celeste Babiarz, Altar Guild

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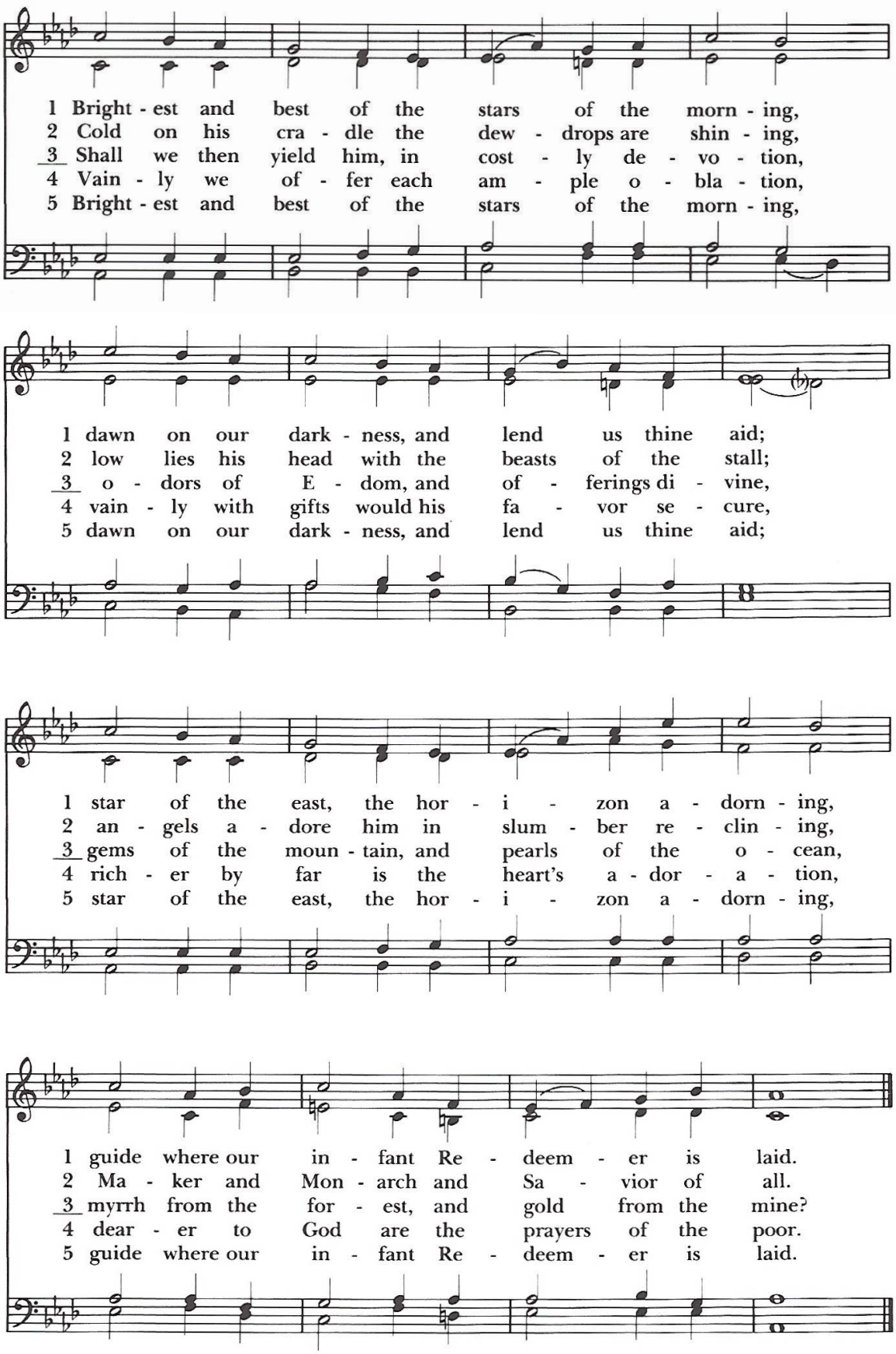
Words: Reginald Heber (1783-1826), alt.
Music: *Morning Star*, James Proctor Harding (1850-1911) 11 10. 11 10

Sequence Hymn

"The First Nowell"

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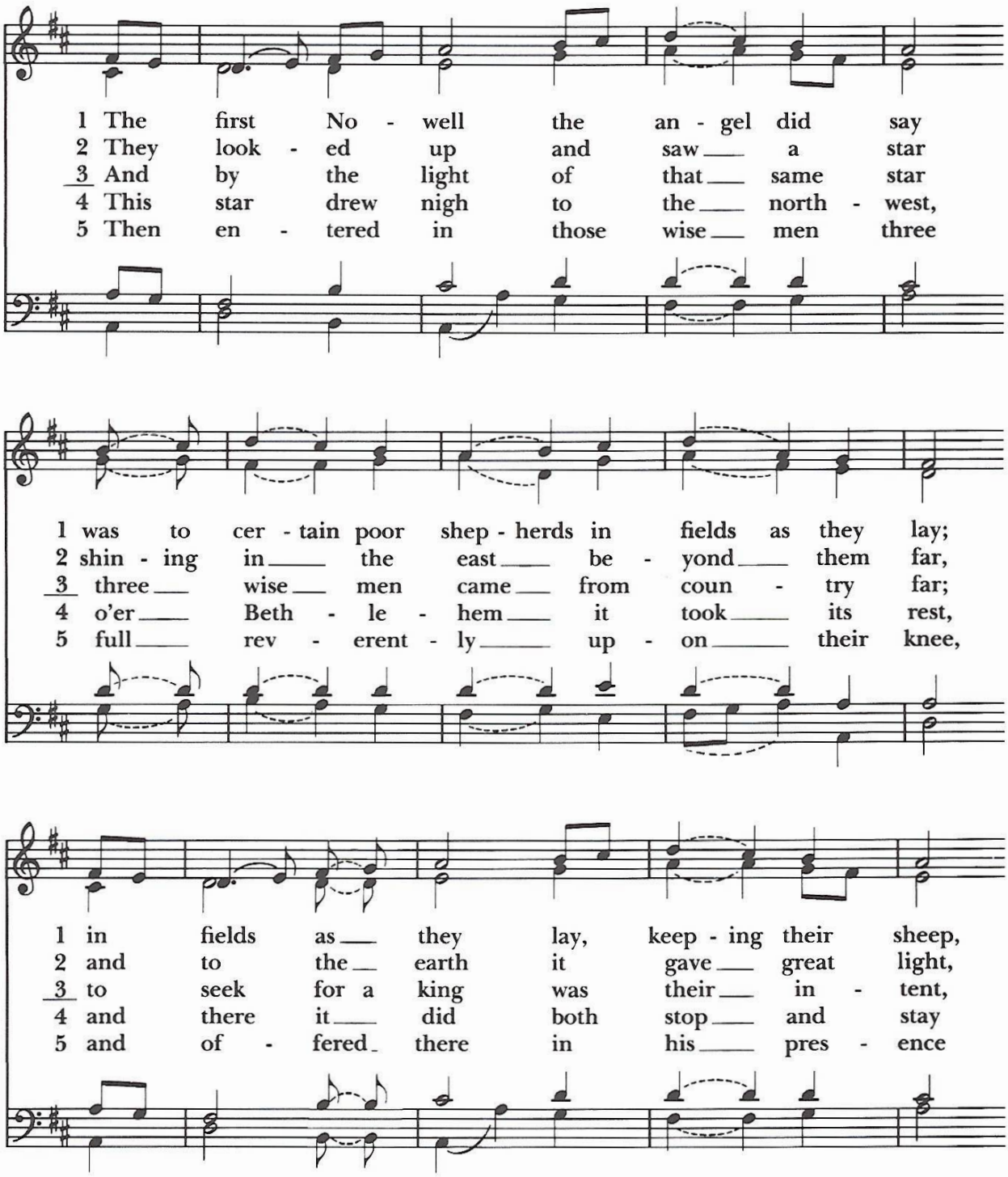
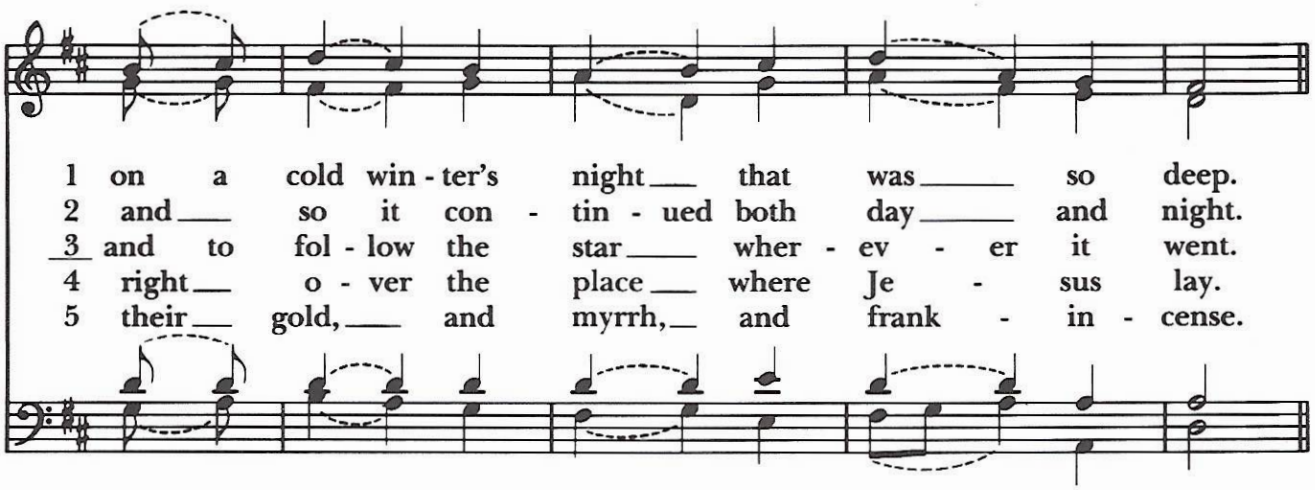
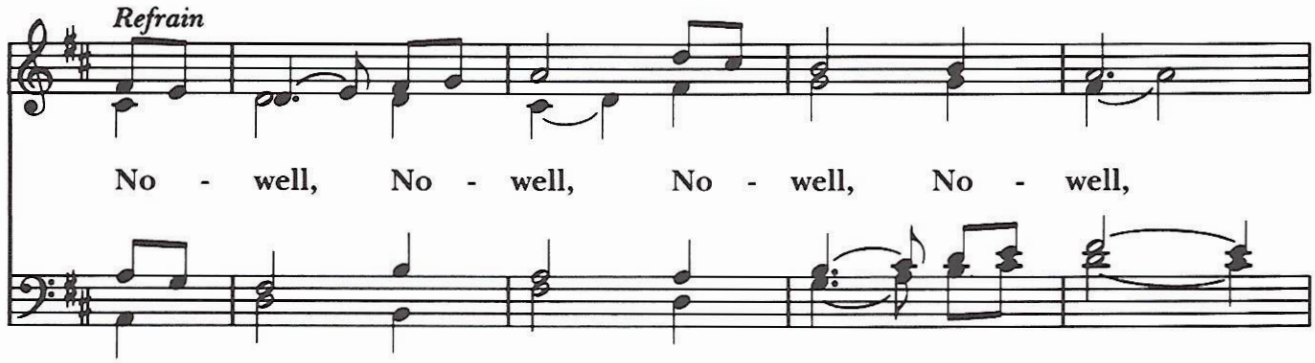
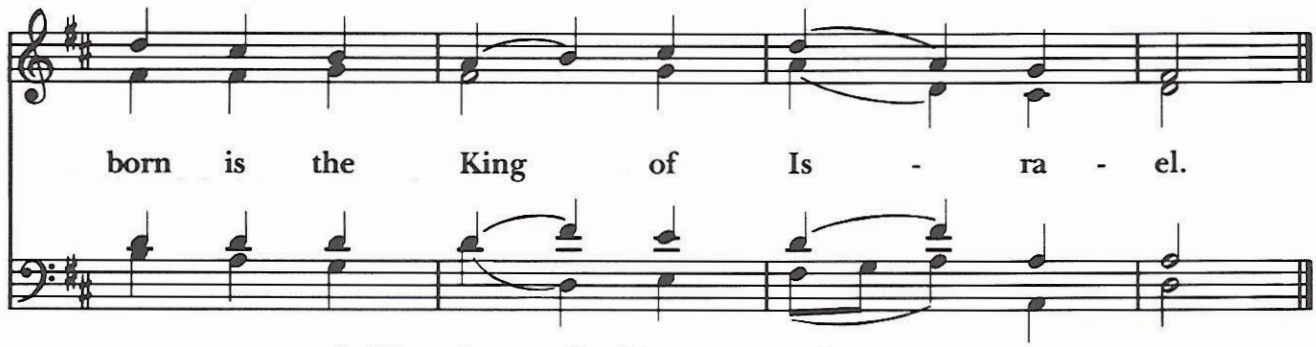
Christmas



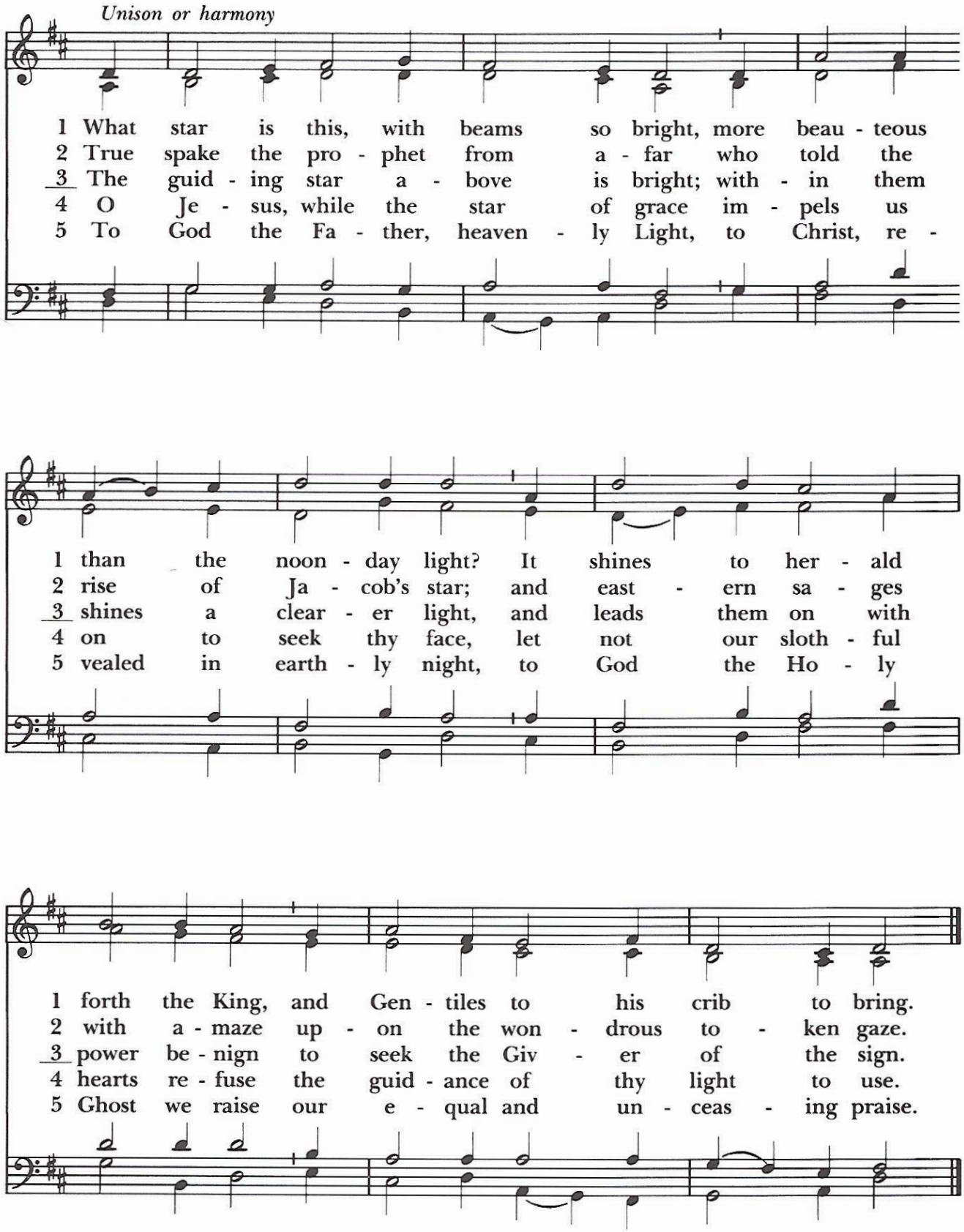


6 Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought.

Refrain

Words: English carol, 18th cent.
Music: *The First Nowell,* English carol, 17th cent.; harm. John Stainer (1840-1901) **Irr. with Refrain**

124 Epiphany



Words: Charles Coffin (1676-1749); tr. *Hymns Ancient and Modern,* 1861, after John Chandler (1807-1876), alt.
Music: *Puer nobis,* melody from Trier MS., 15th cent.; adapt. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621); harm. *Cowley Carol Book,* 1902 LM

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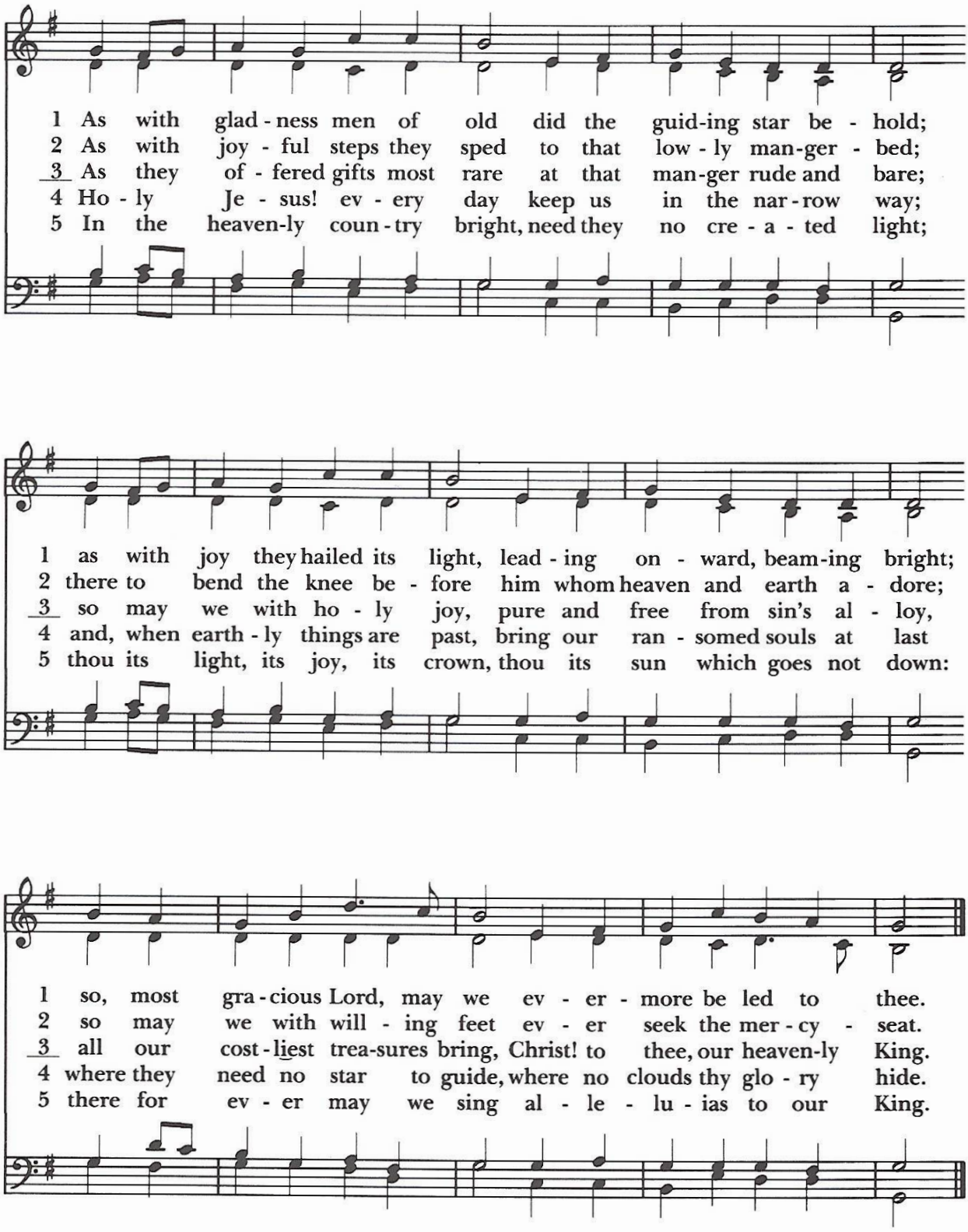
Epiphany

Music: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)
Music: *Dix*, melody Conrad Kocher (1786-1872); arr. William Henry Monk (1823-1889); harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

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