



SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

JANUARY 4, 2026

Preparation for Worship

*God of endless light, you sent a star – rising from darkness,
guiding seekers and sages, overwhelming us with joy.
Let the splendor of your dawning light
grow in us and in all the world
until the whole creation shines with your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Voluntary

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern
BWV 739

Johanna Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Greeting

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Introit

O Light of Light, Love Given Birth

Cary Ratcliff
(b. 1953)

O Light of Light, Love given birth;
Jesus, Redeemer of the earth:
More bright than day your face did show,
Your raiment whiter than the snow.

Two prophets, who had faith to see,
With your elect found company;
The heavens above your glory named,
Your Father's voice his Son proclaimed.

May all who seek to praise aright
Through purer lives show forth your light.
To you, the King of glory, now
All faithful hearts adoring bow.

Latin, 10th century
Transl. Laurence Housman (1865-1959)

✠ Opening Sentences

✠ Hymn 152 [\(see page 9\)](#)

What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

✠ Prayer of Confession

God-with-us,
we confess that we have not embraced your love.
Christ has come into the world,
and yet we do not know him.
Christ has called us to be his own,
and yet we do not accept him.
Forgive us, God of grace.
Show us your mercy and truth until we know in fullness
your good news of great joy.

silent prayer

Holy One, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

✠ Declaration of Forgiveness

Believe the Good News. **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

✠ Response

Jacques Berthier

Canon—4 voices



Music: Jacques Berthier, © 1979, 1988, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

✠ The Peace

Peace be with you. **Peace be with all.**

Conversation with Children

Infants - Age 4 may go to the Nursery in Room 106.

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

N.T. pg. 2

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

Anthem

Brightest and Best

Malcolm Archer
(b. 1952)

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Shall we then yield him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom, and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Reginald Heber, 1811

Sermon

Same Old Story

John W. Wurster

silence and stillness✠ Hymn 138 [\(see page 10\)](#)*Who Would Think That What Was Needed*

WHITE ROSETTES

Offering

Offertory

The people that walked in darkness

G. F. Handel

From Messiah, HWV 56

(1685-1759)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light
 And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,
 Upon them hath the light shined.

Adapt. Isaiah 9:2

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

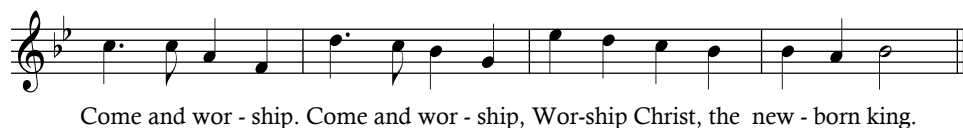
Lift up your hearts!

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

O God . . . Therefore we join the faithful of every time and place
 in singing the endless hymn of praise:



Jesus lived for you. . . We pray, even as we affirm the mystery of faith:



As the children of God, let us pray together:

**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.**

The Breaking of Bread and the Sharing of God's Gifts

Communion Music

✠ Prayer after Communion

God of all the nations,
we thank you for the wideness of your table,
where there is room enough and food enough
for all who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
**As we have met the living Christ in this meal,
transform our lives that we may become
the body of Christ in the world. Amen.**

✠ Hymn 147 [\(see page 11\)](#)

The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL

✠ Charge and Blessing

Please be seated in silence for the closing voluntary, or kindly depart quietly.

Voluntary

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Johann Pachelbel
(1653-1706)

SERVING TODAY

Pastors

Omar Rouchon | John Wurster

Liturgist

Suzanne Kerr

Musicians

Matthew Dirst, organist | Cecilia Duarte, soloist | St. Philip Choir | Daniel Boyd, baritone
Justin Langham, director of music

WORSHIP NOTES

To receive communion today, please come forward via the center aisle and receive a piece of bread. Gluten-free bread is also available. You may dip the bread in the chalice of grape juice and receive communion by intinction or you may take from the tray a small cup of grape juice. You may return to your pew via the side aisles. Those who have difficulty coming forward may receive communion in their seats by signaling the servers. Because the table of Jesus Christ is open to all, everyone is welcome to receive communion today.

An additional offering is received when communion is celebrated. Gifts will benefit SEARCH. For over 35 years, SEARCH Homeless Services has been a trusted leader in the fight to end homelessness in Houston. Rather than offering temporary fixes, SEARCH focuses on long-term solutions that help people move from the streets back into homes of their own and rebuild their lives – because everyone deserves a place to call home. One program especially dear to the hearts of St. Philippians is SEARCH's preschool, the House of Tiny Treasures (HTT). HTT serves children, ages 21 months to 5, who've been impacted by homelessness and poverty, providing them with the skills they need to thrive in school and in life. Each year, the St. Philip Stitches sew and donate quilts for

every child enrolled - a treasured gift of comfort and care that reflects the heart of our partnership. Visit their website at www.Searchhomeless.org. Gifts may be brought to the front basket during the final hymn. You may also make a secure contribution through [St. Philip Life](#) and choosing the Communion fund or by sending a check to the church office, with "Communion" in the memo line.

Today's Lectionary readings:

- Jeremiah 31:7-14 — *God will bring the people home, turning their mourning into joy.*
- Psalm 147:12-20 — *The word of the Lord goes forth; God fills us with good things.*
- Ephesians 1:3-14 — *We were chosen in Christ from the beginning to give glory to God.*
- John 1:(1-9) 10-18 — *Those who trust in Christ have power to become children of God.*

MUSIC NOTES

Sebastian Bach's setting of *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, today's **opening voluntary**, uses the familiar Epiphany chorale "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" as the basis for a leisurely chorale prelude. Each section of this work features distinct rhythmic figuration accompanying the chorale melody's various phrases, which migrate from voice to voice in long notes throughout. The **closing voluntary** treats the same hymn tune in a lively trio texture. Its composer, Johann Pachelbel, was one of the leading Lutheran church musicians of the era immediately preceding that of J. S. Bach.

Today's choral music presents two musical reflections on divine light revealed. The hymn text *O Light of Light, Love Given Birth* contemplates Christ as "light

from light," made known in humility and love, while English composer Malcolm Archer's setting of *Brightest and Best*, drawing on Reginald Heber's Epiphany text, adds a sense of movement and radiance, musically portraying the star that leads the Magi through an inviting tune and a lively organ accompaniment.

Found in the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah*, our **offertory** musically portrays the journey of Christians from darkness before Christ to the light brought through Jesus' birth. A master of Baroque text painting, Handel uses the interplay of relative minor and major modes to depict each element of the text, along with a persistently mysterious chromaticism.

—Matthew Dirst & Justin Langham

IN OUR PRAYERS

A memorial service for Tom Lewis, who died On December 14, is scheduled for January 10 at 11 AM.

St. Philippians and their families — Jan Meyer; Joyce Fox; Jacqueline Hamilton Taylor; Kay Cash; Pam Taylor; Deb Burks; Sondra Sullivan; Emily Estill; Joy Maguire; Bonnie Moore; David Winship; Bob Ardell; Diane Clarke; Mary Herlitz; Dick Nunn; Ben Dees; Joe Harwood; Kathryn Harwood; Nancy E. Johnson; Eleanor Grant; Judy Nunn; Molly Boren-Whitney; Don Padgett; Steve Adger; Arlette Keene; Mezgebe Gebray; Wilma Grether — mother of Kurt Grether; Kathy Bailey and family—sister of Peg Palisin; Jo Hadley Smith — cousin of William Rowe; Katie Forbes — daughter of Marise Robbins-Forbes; Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson and partner John Bonica; Ann Perenyi — mother of Lad Perenyi; and Ann Perkins Cloud — cousin of Stephen Paine.

Homebound — Elizabeth Arp; Beverly Baker; Carolyn Keeble; John Bobbitt; Joan Boelens; Jan Ostendorf; Joyce Randolph; George and Lorraine Scott; and Mary Sinderson.

Friends of St. Philippians — Greg Anderson — friend of Lorrie Castle; Ann Swanson — friend of Deborah Unruh; Kitty Manson and family; Sidney Roach, Lori Childers O'Connell, Joyce Freudenberg — friends of Stephen Paine; Chris Deflandre — friend of Cara Biddle; Mary Ann Thomas; Erin McDougal and Marianne Keeswood — friends of Kate Burkart; Elaine Ende — friend of Beth Atkinson; Carter Lindley, Tandi Porter, Audrey Eubank Harris, Jay Stokes & Anna Domonte, friends of Curt & Sharon Webb; Marianne Hash — friend of Jane Cooper; Mary Watters and Mindy Cooper-Smith — friends of Bill and Jacqueline Hamilton Taylor; Kenneth and Donna Benton — friends of William Rowe; Patty Ryan and Tom Barnett — friends of Robin and Gary Willis; and Shirley Stubblefield — friend of Barbara Runge.

If you have a pastoral care need or a prayer request you would like to share, please email: deacons@saintphilip.net

Prayer List is a powerful tool for bringing comfort, healing, and peace to those in need. So, let's keep it up to date and continue to lift up our brothers and sisters in prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover art by Diana Weiss

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Preparation for Worship from *Book of Common Worship*, Presbyterian Church (USA). Prayer of Confession and Prayer after Communion from *Call to Worship*, 50.1, Presbyterian Church (USA).

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS


Celebrate your wedding anniversary, family birthdays, or memorialize your mother and father by sponsoring the chancel flowers on Sunday morning. Please sign up to sponsor the flowers on the date which you prefer. If you have any questions, contact Lorrie Castle at 713-622-4807 or lorrie@saintphilip.net. Sandra Truxillo, Flower Coordinator, will call you the week you chose to sponsor flowers to discuss the type of flowers and the message you would like in the bulletin. The standard arrangement for chancel flowers is \$130, special requests or exotic flowers may cost more. Order by clicking below or scanning the QR.

[Reserve Chancel Flowers](#)



[CHANCEL FLOWERS]

ST. PHILIP PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S RETREAT



**SAVINGS FOR EARLY BIRD
REGISTRATION ENDS
MONDAY, JANUARY 5.**

FEBRUARY 6-8 AT CAMP ALLEN

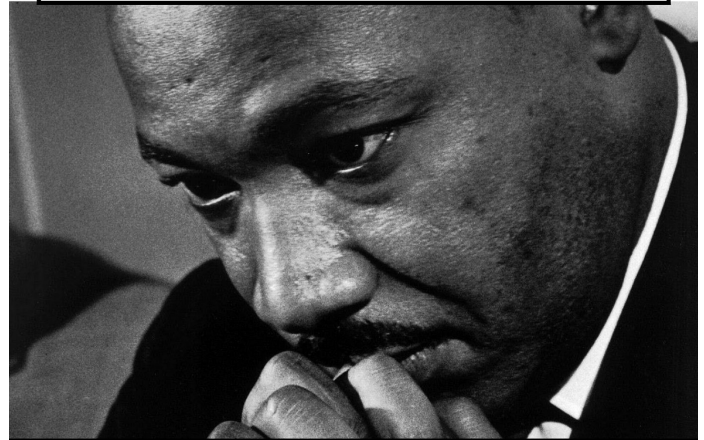
CONGREGATIONS WHO USE THE REVISED COMMON
LECTIONARY WILL READ MOST OF THE BIBLE
OVER ITS THREE-YEAR CYCLE, BUT NOT ALL OF IT!
OUR THEME EXPLORES THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGES
LEFT OUT OF THE LECTIONARY,
THE HISTORY OF THE RCL,
AND WHO DECIDES WHAT IS INCLUDED
IN THE LECTIONARY AND WHY.



**USE QR CODE
TO VIEW COST
AND REGISTER.**

[PW RETREAT 2026]

Community Music Center of Houston's
Scott Joplin Community Chamber Orchestra presents
**The 42nd Annual Birthday Tribute Concert to
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**
Sunday, January 18th, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
Hosted by the Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee



"If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I just want to leave a committed life behind."

St. Phillip's Presbyterian Church
4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056
Presented by St. Phillip's Presbyterian Church &
Community Music Center of Houston
Bring your friends and family to this free concert
www.cmchouston.org/713-523-9710

Duerr
Lecture
Series
2026

Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield

Pastor
First Presbyterian Church
Greensboro, North Carolina

Presenting Lectures
February 22, 23, and 24 2026



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES START AT 9:45 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

GODLY PLAY – Ages 3 – Kindergarten – ROOM 103

CHILDREN: Grades 1-4 – Room 105

YOUTH – Grades 5-12 – DINING ROOM – Watch email and website for new schedule.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY – ROOM 204 – On Nov. 30, we began our study of Isaiah in Volume 2, *Prophets*, in Dr. Robert Alter's *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (2019). Join us as we seek to deepen our understanding of God's faithfulness to all God's people. All are welcome.

CHURCH & SOCIETY – ROOM 201 – Join us from 9:30 – 10:40 AM with presentations in person and by Zoom. **Jan. 11 – The State of Presbytery of New Covenant and the PC (USA) Denomination** presented by Rev. Lynn Hargrove. Lynn will provide her annual update on what is going on in the presbytery and the denomination as a whole. In addition, the General Assembly of the PC (USA) meets this summer in Milwaukee, and Lynn will preview some of the more significant issues and challenges that are likely to be addressed at this biannual session. Rev. Lynn Hargrove is the General Presbyter + Stated Clerk for Administrative Process for Presbytery of New Covenant. "As we seek to live into our new mission and vision statements, we will be looking at who we are and what we do as a presbytery. We are here to offer support to our pastors and congregations as we navigate a society that seems to be in rapid change." If you would like the Zoom link for the classes, email:

jshartman01@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL – In the Children's Chapel, our young disciples learn the whos, whats, wheres, whens and whys of worship in the chapel, while also praying, seeing and hearing God's word at an age-appropriate level. Children return to join the congregation in the first few pews on the lectern side of the church for the last hymn. The Children's Chapel is held every 2nd and 4th Sunday when we have Sunday School classes. Children are able to participate in this during the worship service.

ST. PHILIP DURING THE WEEK

LAMBETH STUDY – Keatan King leads young adults in study on the first Monday of the month evening at 7:00 PM via Zoom. It is a time of study, reflection, and prayer. If you would like more details, email Keatan at:

keatan@saintphilip.net.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDY GROUP – This group meets for an hour once a month on Zoom to read and discuss social justice issues of concern in today's world. Our

current topic is Christian Nationalism, one definition of which is "that America is God's chosen nation and should be defended and governed as such." Attitudes already influencing our legislators include opposition to gay rights, opposition to gun safety efforts, promotion of Christian religion in schools and libraries, book bans, etc. Our current study book is Brian Kaylor's *Baptizing America; how mainline Protestants helped build Christian Nationalism*. Interested persons can contact Sara Jean Jackson sjj10223@gmail.com.

WOMEN'S MONTHLY BOOK CLUB – This self-led, interactive group produces lively discussions and wonderful fellowship. The next meeting is **Jan. 15** at 7:00 PM. *Frostbite: How Refrigeration Changed Our Food, Our Planet, and Ourselves* by Nicola Twilley. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Nina Lambright at: nnl@lambrightlaw.com.

PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP – on recess until **Jan. 10**. Men of all ages are welcome to participate in this self-led group. The Men's Weekly Fellowship meets each Friday in person in the office Conference Room and via Zoom at 11:45 AM. We are learning from *Too Busy Not to Pray* by Bill Hybels. If you would like to join them please contact Gary Gardner at: ggardne148@aol.com.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY – Resumes **Jan. 7**. Wednesday Bible study with John Wurster meets weekly at 9:30 AM, and is a hybrid format with an in-person option in the Office Conference Room and also a Zoom option. Bible novices, Bible experts, and everyone in between is welcome! To get on the list for the Zoom links, send a note to: john@saintphilip.net.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Thursday Evening Circle – Jan. 8 (1x change)
meets 1st Thursday of each month at 7 PM in the Dining Room. Sarah Victorian sarah.m.0617@gmail.com

Monday Morning Saints – Jan. 13
meets 2nd Monday of each month at 10 AM in the Dining Room - Tricia Tolbert phtolbert@gmail.com

The Hallmark Circle – Jan. 14
meets 2nd Wednesday of each month at 1:30 PM - contact Sue Shirley-Howard sue@fluencyhouston.com
for location

Sunday Circle – Jan. 18
meets 3rd Sunday of each month after worship in the Dining Room. Jan Meyer jsmeyer9990@gmail.com

One More Chance Study for Everyone – Jan. 25
Meets 4th Sunday of each month at 10 AM in the Library. Lee Ardell leearnell@gmail.com



Welcome to Worship at St. Philip
Please register your attendance by scanning the QR code or by visiting the Live Stream tab at saintphilip.net.

AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST,
we seek to be an inclusive,
grace-filled community,
engaging the world with open minds,
willing hands and generous hearts.

WE LONG
for deeper faith,
vibrant hope
and boundless love
for everyone, every day, everywhere.

Thank you for joining us today! We hope that you find our worship together to be joyous, meaningful, and thought-provoking. **Children of all ages** are welcome to worship with their families. Activity bags containing worship aids for children are available in the narthex on the way into the sanctuary.

Nursery care is available throughout the morning from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Infants to age 4 are invited to our Nursery which is staffed by professional childcare providers. Please find our Nursery has returned to the Education Bldg. and can be accessed from the hall off the Gathering Area on the first floor. An usher or a greeter will be happy to direct you there.

A Hearing Loop is installed within the sanctuary. If you have a hearing aid equipped with a telecoil, please activate your “T switch” to hear the worship service most clearly. If you need assistance with hearing the service clearly and do not have a t-coil equipped hearing aid, please ask an usher for wireless headphones. **LARGE PRINT COPIES OF TODAY’S BULLETINS ARE IN THE NARTHEX.**

Connect with St. Philip through saintphilip.net and our social media. To join our e-mail list for regular news updates, send a note to lorrie@saintphilip.net.

If you are interested in joining St. Philip Presbyterian Church by profession of faith, by reaffirming your faith, or by transferring your membership, please speak with one of the ministers today or call the church office during the week. **The Session meets the third Sunday of each month after the 11:00 worship service in the Library for the purpose of receiving new members.**

Worship with us, whenever, wherever. Our 11:00 a.m. Sunday service is live-streamed at saintphilip.net. Services can be viewed live or later in our video archives.

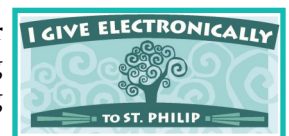
Contributions, pledge payments, communion gifts and other donations to support the Church can be made anytime through our website, or sent to the Church Office at 4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056. To make stock contributions contact Denise Ferrell at denise@saintphilip.net.



St. Philip Day School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality childcare at no cost to low-income families. To support the school, **please make all contributions directly to St. Philip Day School**, rather than to St. Philip Presbyterian Church. Please make checks payable to “St. Philip DAY SCHOOL” You are welcome to leave in the church offering plate or mail to St. Philip Day School, 4807 San Felipe, Houston, 77056. If you have any questions, please contact Candice Harris, Program Director, at Director@stphilipdayschool.org.

Lost & Found—did you leave a pair of glasses, umbrella, or other item during worship? There is a canvas basket in the library where these items may be found. Jewelry, phones and more valuable items are turned into Lorrie Castle in the Church Office, lorrie@saintphilip.net or 713-622-4807.

I Give Electronically—in response to parents’ hopes that their children might be able to see their ongoing commitment to St. Philip and with the intent to better represent the totality of our giving as a congregation, we have available in the pews giving cards that can be placed in the offering plate by our electronic givers.



Nametags—Please wear your nametags not just in the sanctuary, but as you socialize before and after worship and at other events. To make it easier, if you don't want to bring your nametag home, there are labeled wicker BASKETS by several exit doors for you to return your nametag at the last possible moment! Those returned tags will be replaced on the boards in the narthex before the following Sunday morning. Visitor nametags are available in the pews and from an usher.

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.

LM

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Hymn 138

Who Would Think That What Was Needed

1 Who would think that what was need - ed to trans -
 2 Shep - herds watch and wise men won - der; mon - archs
 3 Cen - tu - ries of skill and sci - ence span the

form and save the earth might not be a
 scorn and an - gels sing; such a place as
 past from which we move, yet ex - pe - rience

plan or ar - my, proud in pur - pose, proved in
 none would reck - on hosts a ho - ly help - less
 ques - tions wheth - er, with such prog - ress, we im -

worth? Who would think, de - spite de - ri - sion, that a
 thing. Sta - ble beasts and by - passed strang - ers watch a
 prove. While the hu - man lot we pon - der, lest our

Hindsight is nearly always clearer than foresight, and with gentle good humor this Christmas hymn points out how great was the gap between human expectation and God's actual way of providing a means of salvation for us. God's ways continually exceed our claims to comprehend them.

TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987

MUSIC: John L. Bell, 2005

Text and Music © 1987, 2005 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

WHITE ROSETTES

8.7.8.7.D

child should lead the way?
ba - by laid in hay; God sur - pris - es earth with
hopes and hu - mor fray,

heav - en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.

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Hymn 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* / *nê*) as well to "news" (*nova* / *nouvelle*).

TEXT: English carol; *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, 2nd ed., 1823, alt.
 MUSIC: English carol; Sandys' *Christmas Carols*, 1833

THE FIRST NOWELL
 Irregular

born is the King of Is - ra - el.

The musical score is written for two staves, treble and bass, in the key of D major (two sharps). The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The music consists of a series of chords and single notes, with some notes beamed together. The piece ends with a double bar line.

- 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*

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