



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
COVINGTON, GA



FROM
GENERATION
TO GENERATION...
We keep seeking

EPIPHANY
JANUARY 1, 2022



Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

Epiphany March on SALZBURG Franklin B. Ashdown
There's a Spirit in the Air Sue Mitchell Wallace, based on LAUDS
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us William B. Bradbury

Prelude

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus ASSAM (Folk Song from India)

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Calling all seekers, all dreamers, all believers...

Calling all glass-half-full optimists and lighthouse keepers...

Calling all star-chasers and bedtime prayer speakers...

Bring your questions, your hope, your faith and your fear into this space.

God is here.

✦ Hymn of Praise 147

The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL

✦ Call to Confession

✦ Community Confession

God of starlight, we know that faith isn't a vending machine. Good news can't be bought or manufactured. It does not arrive with a push of a button.

Instead, in this noisy world, we have to look for you in our midst.

We have to walk toward you, just as the Magi did.

We have to believe that love really can change the world.

We have to seek the stars beyond the city lights.

Forgive us for forgetting that.

Forgive us for seeking you with only part of our hearts.

We long to be more like the Magi; may we walk your way every single day.

Amen.

✦ Assurance of God's Love and Forgiveness

Church, we are forgiven!

We are free to try again.

✦ Response 137

He Came Down

HE CAME DOWN

*He came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light; hallelujah forevermore.*

✦ Passing of the Peace



Proclaiming the Word

Wondering with God's Children

Prayer for God's Wisdom and Understanding

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 60:1-7

Pew Bible page 690

Matthew 2:1-23

Pew Bible page 2

Message

We Keep Seeking

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



Responding to the Word

✦ Hymn of Response 151

We Three Kings of Orient Are

KINGS OF ORIENT

✦ Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that faith is active,
found on long walks, and in long talks,
in future days, and down memory lane.**

**We believe that those who seek
will find, although it may not be what they expected.**

We believe that God finds us first.

**We believe that God drops breadcrumbs along our way
in the shape of people, invitations, and even starlight.**

**We believe that being a seeker—
of God, of justice, of community—is a holy thing.**

**So we strive to live with an open spirit,
with soft hearts, and with room to grow.**

May it be so.

This we believe. Amen.

Prayers of the People and 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.

Star Words

**God of open horizons and open roads,
like the Magi so many years ago, we are here, seeking you.
Step by step, we have wandered into this space
with the hope of feeling you in our midst.
Step by step, you have claimed us, loved us, and fed us.
Today we have drawn star words.
For some, these words are full of meaning, challenge, and invitation already.
For others, these words are a blank canvas—inviting you into our lives.
So as a new year dawns, we pray that just as you have spoken to the
generations before us, you would speak to us again. Allow us to use these
star words as a tool that might help us hear you more clearly.
May they guide us, as the star guided the Magi.
And in a year, may we find ourselves here, together again, with mouths full
of praise for the ways in which you have been present with us.
Together we pray, with the saints before us. Amen.**

Offering Our Gifts

Offertory

*Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light
Ermuntre Dich Mein Schuacher*

Johann Schop
Harm. by J. S. Bach
Arr. by Michael Cox

✠Response 145

What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES

***So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!***

Prayer of Gratitude

All are invited to join in our community Prayer of Gratitude by lifting up a one-word prayer of thanksgiving.



Being the Church in the World

✦ **Sending Hymn 152** *What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright* PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

✦ Charge and Benediction

First Presbyterian Church Covington is a Christian community existing to glorify God by welcoming all of God's children. We celebrate through serving, teaching, praying, eating, crying, singing, and dancing with the Holy Spirit. As works in progress, we seek to respond to God's presence in our church, lives, and community.

Postlude

March of the Three Kings (FARANDOLE)

Georges Bizet



Worship Notes

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Contact Cards

There are Contact Cards in each pew. Visitors are invited to connect with us by filling out a Contact Card and placing it in the offering plate. Members may also choose to fill out a contact card if their contact information has changed.

Children in Worship

Good news! Beginning in the new year during worship, Neeley or Erin will begin taking your children downstairs to the nursery after Wondering with God's Children (only if your children are planning to go to the nursery). This is to help you stay in worship and us get them to the nursery safely. We will sign in your children in the nursery so you can sign them out when you pick them up! As always, children are always welcome to wiggle and giggle in the pews! Worship Bags are available for children on the rack outside the Sanctuary in the Narthex.

Serving Today

Tech Team | Dan Walden, Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley

Usher Chair | Pat Harper

Acolyte | Alexander Whisnant



Star Words Notes

The use of star words, also called "star gifts," is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade now. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are written or printed on paper. These star words are then arranged, most commonly face down, on the Lord's Table. At some point during your Epiphany service, individuals are invited to draw a word off the Table, and to use that word as a guiding word throughout the year. Typically, participants are encouraged to trust the word they have drawn, and not to replace the word. Individuals are often encouraged to place their star word somewhere they will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word.



Worship Music Notes

The First Nowell

No other carol casts such a spell. The sweet, plaintive strains of "The First Nowell," quietly sung on a snow-clad Christmas Eve, bring tears to the eyes and gentle peace to the heart. *Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell. Born is the King of Israel.* If only we knew who wrote it! It first appeared anonymously in *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, published by Davis Gilbert in 1823, and the traditional music evidently came from an unknown source in the west of England.

The poetry itself is plain. If we were to recite this rather lengthy piece, we'd get only a garbled sense of the Christmas story. There's no indication in Scripture, for example, that the shepherds saw the Magi's star. And the final verse of the original carol seems anticlimactic. But when combined with its wistful music, the words glor and our hearts are strangely warmed. The word "Nowell" is the English form of the French "Noel," a shout of joy formerly used at Christmas, a clue that the word is older than its first printing, It may have Latin and French roots related to "born" (*natus / ne*) as well to "news" (*nova / nouvelle*). Modern hymns omit several of the original verses.

We Three Kings of Orient Are

Strange but true: A visit from St. Nicholas paved the way for "We Three Kings." It happened like this. After the War of 1812, Anglicans in America decided to establish their own seminary for training Episcopalian ministers. The proposal was first made in 1814; in 1817, the Episcopalian General Convention voted to locate the school in New York City. But where in New York?

Clement Clarke Moore, son of New York's Episcopalian Bishop, was an up-and-coming land developer. He had recently become well-known because of a poem he had written, which began: "*'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse*" The popularity of his poem (reportedly written following a sleigh ride home from Greenwich Village) made his name a household word. The fame and increased

income made him a more generous and sought-after layman.

Moore owned a large estate in the undeveloped northern regions of Manhattan. He referred to it as "a quiet, rural retreat on the picturesque banks of the Hudson." Hearing that the Episcopalians needed land for their seminary, he offered a portion of his estate, and thus was born General Theological Seminary. Moore, also a linguist and Hebrew scholar, became one of General's first professors, teaching biblical languages.

Some years later, a reporter named John H. Hopkins, Jr., enrolled in this seminary. Born in Pittsburgh, Hopkins had matriculated at the University of Vermont before moving to New York to pursue legal studies. But he fell in love with the Lord's work, enrolled in General, and graduated from the seminary in 1850. In 1855, he was hired as the school's first instructor of church music.

Hopkins wrote "We Three Kings" as part of a Christmas pageant produced by General Theological Seminary in 1857. In 1863, it was published in his *Carols, Hymns, and Songs*. The hymnal went through three editions by 1882, establishing Hopkins as a leader in Episcopalian hymnody. He wrote other hymns, but most have fallen into obscurity. "We Three Kings" was his crowning achievement, made possible, in a way, through the generosity of another poet whose most famous work ends: *But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight, Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!*

What Child Is This

Feelings of sadness come over me whenever I hear this deeply moving carol. It is, after all, set in the key of E minor, the "Saddest of all keys." Yet triumphant joy dispels the sadness as we exclaim: "This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing." The melancholic melody is a famous old British tune called "Greensleeves," originally a ballad about a man pining for his lost love; the fair Lady Greensleeves. Tradition says it was composed by King Henry VIII for Anne Boleyn. That's unlikely, but we do know that Henry's daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, danced to the tune. Shakespeare referred to it twice in his play, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In Act V, for example, Falstaff said, "Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of "Green Sleeves."

It was licensed to two different printers in 1580, and soon thereafter was being used with religious texts. Its first association with Christmas came in 1642, in a book titled *New Christmas Carols*, in which it was used with the poem "The Old Year Now Away Has Fled." The last verse says: *Come, give's more liquor when I doe call, I'll drink to each one in this hall ... And God send us a happy new yeare!*

For nearly 150 years, however, "Greensleeves" has been most identified with "What Child Is This?" The words of this carol are taken from a longer poem written by an insurance agent named William Chatterton Dix, born in Bristol, England, in 1837. His father was a surgeon who wanted his son to follow his footsteps. But having no interest in medicine, William left Bristol Grammar School, moved to Glasgow, and sold insurance. His greatest love was his pose and poetry for Christ. He wrote two devotional books, a book for children, and scores of hymns, two

of which remain popular Christmas carols: "What Child Is This?" and "As with Gladness Men of Old." All of Dix's hymns should be more widely sung today, for they are masterpieces of poetry, filled with rich scriptural truth.



Worship Art Notes

Today's worship guide cover is a canvas collage on handmade paper with acrylic and gilding by Carmelle Beaugelin titled *The Golden Pilgrimage*. The following is an artist statement excerpt.

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the pilgrimage of three distinguished individuals to the newborn revelation of God revealed in the Christ child. Whether there were only three wise men, or kings, or Magi does not matter. However many of them made the harrowing pilgrimage to the newborn Jesus, they were most likely foreigners and outsiders.

Often the community we begin a journey with is not the same community that supports us throughout our journey's length. *The Golden Pilgrimage* depicts the kind of surrogacy that occurs when a friend, a sibling, a neighbor, a father, or a pastor steps in as a much-needed friend. Even in the story of our Savior's birth, it is not a matter of whether blood is thicker than water. Instead, what matters are the bonds that tie a community together when love and acceptance flow like the healing frankincense and myrrh of the gift-bearers.



1169 Clark Street SW, Covington, GA 30014 | fpccov.org | 770.786.7321

Want to Get Involved?

Reach out to become a more involved member of the church! We always have something happening that we would love for you to be a part of. You could be an integrated member of our church by volunteering with witness team, becoming an usher, joining a book club, singing in the choir or many other activities. Reach out to the office and we'll point you in the right direction!
Email: catherine@fpccov.org or call: 770-786-7321

Deacons

Day Kennon (2022)
Eleanor Scarborough (2023)
Darcel Tabb (2024)
Alice Walker (2022)

Session

Class of 2022	
John McCarthy	<i>Clerk of Session</i>
Aubrey Evans	<i>Christian Education</i>
Stephanie Scarborough	<i>Worship</i>
Trista Hooten Wilson	<i>Welcome</i>
Class of 2023	
Stan Hall	<i>Facilities</i>
Louly Hay Kapp	<i>Marketing</i>
Ed Perkerson	<i>Strategic Planning</i>
Bob Tabb	<i>Finance</i>
Class of 2024	
Billy Fortson	<i>Personnel</i>
Pat Harper	<i>Worship</i>
Curtis Watson	<i>Witness</i>

First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	<i>Senior Pastor</i>	<i>Nursery Staff</i>
Erin Morgan	<i>Associate Pastor</i>	Danielle Schubert
Alicia Taylor	<i>Dir. of Music & Worship Arts</i>	Beverley Beasley
Alice Walker	<i>CAGO, AAGO Organist/ Ambassador Choir</i>	Samantha Boozer
Catherine Laseter	<i>Dir. of Communications & Operations</i>	Laina Lalane
Peni Kehoe	<i>Finance Administrator</i>	Kennedy Lynn
		Amanda Sotolongo
		Kyla White

BLESS THIS MESS
FAITHFUL PARENTING CLASS
 Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30pm
 in the FPC Library
 Jan. 18 | Jan. 25 | Feb. 1
 Childcare provided.

Based on the book
 by Rev. Molly Baskette
 & Ellen O'Donnell, PhD
 RSVP to order the book for
 \$10 through Erin or Neeley

- Sunday, January 1**
Epiphany
 11:00am Worship - Star Words
- Monday, January 2**
 Office Closed
- Tuesday, January 3**
 10:00am Elizabeth Ann Circle
- Thursday, January 5**
 RSVP Deadline for Youth Bowling
- Saturday, January 7**
 2:00pm Undecorating the Church
- Sunday, January 8**
Baptism of the Lord
 9:45am Sunday School
 11:00am Worship



PW Circles:

January Meetings

Elizabeth Ann Circle will meet on January 3rd at 10:00am on

Zoom and in the Fellowship Hall. The Zoom link is the same as last time and is available on the Presbyterian Women page of the FPC website. Discussion will be lead by Elizabeth Martin Pope.

Martha Circle to meet on January 10th at 10:30am. Pily Waetzig will host in her home. Alice Walker will facilitate lesson #5: Sabbath and Servitude.

First Presbyterian Church Covington, GA

YOUTH BOWLING WITH CONYERS PREBYTERIAN

Join us for a strikingly good time!

Please RSVP to Erin by Jan. 5

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 2:00 PM

Drop off at FPC
 Bowling in Conyers at AMF American Lanes

We are going bowling at AMF in Conyers with the youth from Conyers Presbyterian Church. The cost is \$10 per youth. Drop off is at our church at 2 pm, and we will text you a pick up time. Please RSVP to Erin by Jan. 5 and complete the permission form.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Illness

- ✦ E.W. Simms, great Uncle of Robert Lane
- ✦ Shelvie "Memama" Belser, grandmother of Neeley Lane
- ✦ Violet Martin, granddaughter of Chris and Barbara Martin - health issues
- ✦ Ellen Clary, ex-wife of Bill Clary - ovarian cancer
- ✦ Cy Wolverton - kidney disease, recovering at William Breman Jewish Home
- ✦ Hulda, friend of Judy Davis - breast cancer
- ✦ Jody Harris, friend of Chris, Barbara and Alex Martin
- ✦ Dan Walden - knee surgery recovery
- ✦ Richard, friend of Miriam and Jack Wheeler - chemo, radiation, swollen limbs.
- ✦ Joe Burns, brother of Cathy Dobbs
- ✦ Stephanie Fortson - broken hip
- ✦ Patrick Carmichael

- ✦ Beverly Beasley, friend of Jean Elder - caring for husband who has leukemia
- ✦ Larry Cox, brother-in-law of Randy Layton - cancer
- ✦ Bob Darby, friend of Jeff MacKenzie - leg amputated, kidney problems
- ✦ Bruce Hamilton, brother-in-law of Theodosia Wade - cancer
- ✦ Gary Lott, brother of Tricia Hinton - recovering at home following two brain surgeries
- ✦ Linea Lott, niece of Tricia Hinton - leukemia treatment
- ✦ Karen Lein Kaasa, sister-in-law of Julie MacKenzie - home health care
- ✦ Tony Taylor, brother of Alicia Taylor - gradually gaining strength with physical therapy
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining - vision loss
- ✦ Blair Weaver - health issues
- ✦ Joyce Williams, sister of Danny Vining - Alzheimer's

Military Service

- ✦ Billy Scarborough - Marines
- ✦ Koen Ardis - Navy

Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Penny Blakeney - Oaks Assisted Living
- ✦ Julia Brubaker - Benton House
- ✦ Jean Elder - Florida with her daughter
- ✦ Dot Fincher - Merryvale
- ✦ Travis Moss - Westbury, Conyers
- ✦ Gene Wallace - Merryvale
- ✦ Louise White - Merryvale

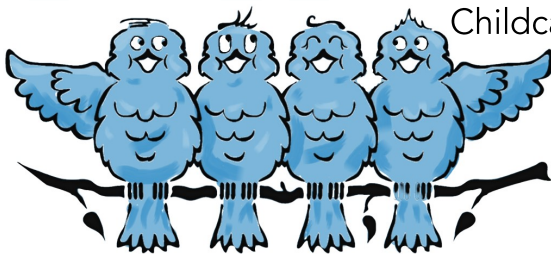
Prayer Requests

All prayer requests should be sent to:
catherine@fpccov.org
 Requests may be removed after three weeks if not updated.

All choirs start back on Wednesday, January 11th See you then!



Joyful Noise—4:30pm
 Hallelujah Kids!—5:00pm
 Carillon Handbell Choir—6:00pm
 Chancel Choir—7:00pm
 Childcare provided.



Come help the worship team undecorate the church!
January 7th at 2:00pm
 All helpful hands are invited to join!

You are invited to **"Text to Give"** your offering. Text FPCCOV followed by your donation amount to: 73256



Or point your camera at the QR code and follow the link to give online.