

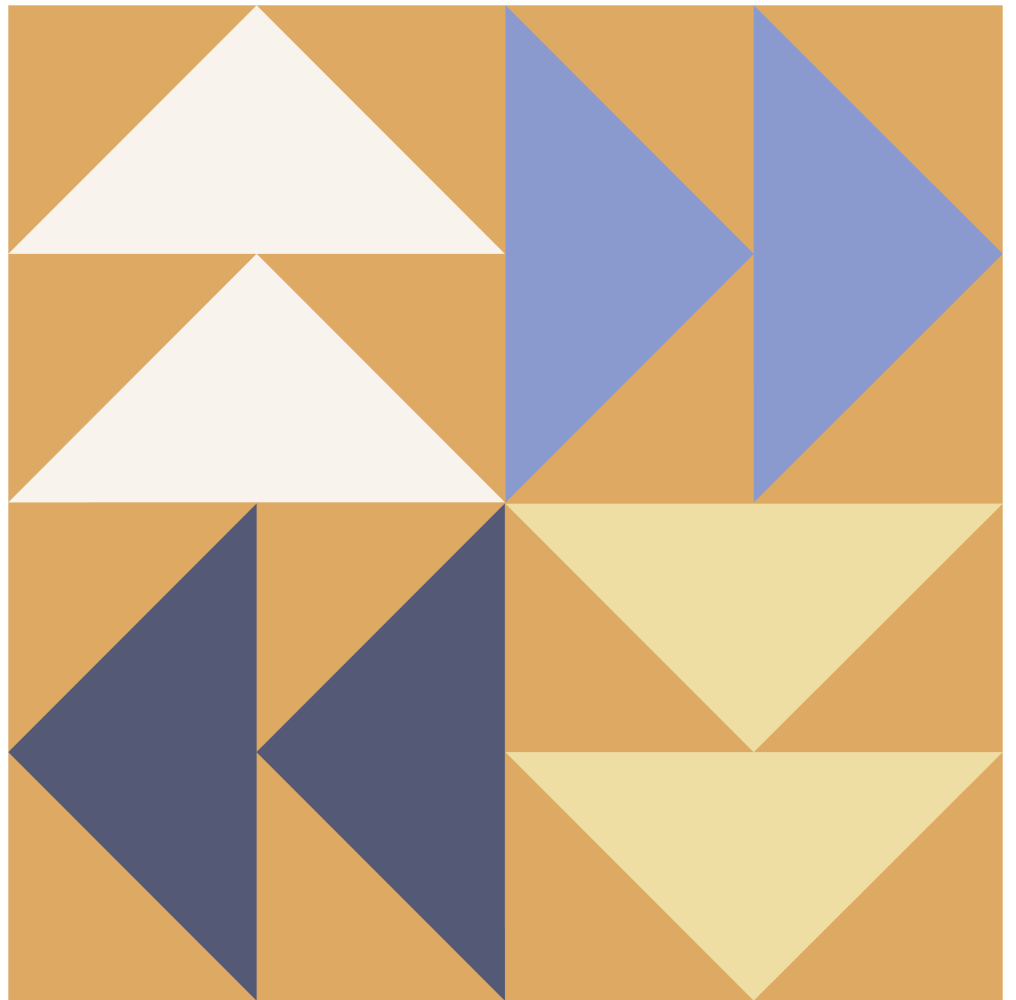


**Epiphany
Sunday**

**JANUARY 5
2025**

10:00AM

The triangles in this quilt square point in multiple directions. Much like the magi's journey, the path that lies ahead isn't always clear or straight. Thankfully, we have the guidance of the Spirit to light our way.



THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT

▶ Our worship service is livestreaming on our YouTube Channel: [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://www.upcbgm.org/youtube)
Join via phone call on Zoom: Call (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 865 274 8433



Everyone is welcome here
**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**
do justice • love kindness • walk humbly with God



WELCOME TO THE CELEBRATION!

January 5, 2025 • 10:00am

Too often, we've been told that a successful life is a linear one. But in reality, our lives unfold with many unexpected twists and turns. The Magi follow a star, embarking on a long journey in a foreign land in order to honor the newborn Christ. Instead of returning to Herod as commanded, they trust their dreams and go home by another way. Their road isn't straight, but God "makes a way in the wilderness" (Isaiah 43:19) as they follow their intuition and diverge from the expected path.

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH

OPENING BELL *The bell tolls to center our hearts and minds for worship.*

GATHERING MUSIC "Come, Come, Whoever You Are" Aimée Backus, Andrea Gilebarto, Robert Manners, Starletta Noll-Long, Austin Shadduck, *vocals*

Come, come, whoever you are: wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.
Ours is no caravan of despair. Come, yet again, come.

Words: Adapt. from Rumi, 13th c. Music: Lynn Adair Ungar.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP (*responsive*) *From Generation to Generation... | A Sanctified Art*

One: 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.

All: God is here.

***SONG OF GATHERING** "Arise, Your Light Is Come!" (see page 3)

GATHERING PRAYER (*together*)

adapted from Close to Home | A Sanctified Art

Holy God,

You speak to us in Scripture and in prayers,

in sunrises and sunsets,

in friends and in strangers,

in dreams and in songs.

You are speaking all the time,

and how often do we miss it?

(continued)

* = *Please rise in body or in spirit.*

HEARING ASSISTANCE devices are available; please inquire with one of our technicians at the back of the sanctuary.

1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey; show
 2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door; pro -
 3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born, bind
 4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song! Rise

forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.
 claim the cap-tive's lib - er - ty, good ti - dings to the poor.
 up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
 up like ea - gles on the wing, God's power will make us strong.

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**Still our minds so that we can listen with a depth
 that we have not heard before.
 Still our hearts so that we can receive with open arms
 what it is you are offering us today.
 We know you are speaking,
 so we are listening.
 Gratefully we pray, amen!**

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

WE GATHER AT THE LORD'S TABLE, WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

INVITATION

adapted from How does a weary world rejoice? | A Sanctified Art

Friends, we know what it feels like to look for God.
 We know what it feels like to turn our heads up to the sky,
 looking for stars, listening for a voice that calls us beloved.

I think that's part of why we end up here,
 because we are hoping that in the midst of this messy world
 we might catch a glimpse of God
 that will carry us through.

Well, friends, I have good news.
God is already here.
Like a mighty wind, God is moving through this room.
God is at this Table, inviting us forward.
The invitation may not be as clear as a star in the sky,
or a voice that parts the clouds,
but just as God called Jesus “Beloved,” God calls you the same.

So come to this Table with your questions and your doubts.
Come with your joys and your gratitude.
Come seeking, come hungry, come curious.
Come open. Come not because you have to, but because you can.
Come with all of you, for there is room for you here.

This is God’s Table; this is God’s meal.
This is Christ’s table. Everyone is welcome.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

We remember the witness of Jesus to challenge the empires of the world, to stop at nothing to declare God’s love for all people.

We remember how the world responded to Jesus’s ministry and teaching, by killing him. And we remember God’s bold challenge to the world in bringing Jesus back to life. And because of all this, we dare to remember the night when Christ was betrayed.

Gathered at table with his closest followers, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this. Eat this. It is my body, given for you. Do this — and remember me.”

After supper he took a cup, gave thanks, and offered it also, saying, “This is the cup of a new and everlasting covenant, poured out willingly and lovingly. Drink this — and remember me.”

And so we remember, and we reconnect with one another in this season, and as we invite Christ anew into our hearts, so we rededicate ourselves to proclaiming in word and deed Christ’s realm. Amen!

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION *(together)*

adapted from How does a weary world rejoice? | A Sanctified Art

God of today, tomorrow, and yesterday,

As we begin this new year, we once again find ourselves looking for you.

We long for the clarity of a star in the sky, or a voice in the clouds declaring your presence in our lives.

So today we ask that you would make yourself known to us.

Do what only you can do. Reach into our spirits to give us a boost of confidence that love is real and we are not alone. Remind us that we are beloved in your eyes.

(continued)

Holy God, you call us beloved. You are with us in our joy. You are with us in our sorrow. Surely, at this table, you are with us even now. With grateful hearts, we unite our voices in prayer, using the words your son taught us to pray, saying:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*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!

WE SHARE THE FEAST (*responsive*)

If your elements of Communion are with you, rest your hands lightly upon them. If they are in the front of the sanctuary, open your hands to be sacramental, filled with the power to change your heart and the world. We ask God's grace on us and on all those who are in our prayers this morning, and God's blessing on our elements and our hands.

One: We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.

All: God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.

One: We are welcome to this gift of God, the cup of blessing.

All: God's love is poured out with love and abundance.

COMMUNION MUSIC

PRAYER AFTER THE MEAL (*together*)

adapted from Words from the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

**Guiding God, we know that this life of faith is not easy.
Even the Magi, those faithful seekers, had to change course.
Even the Magi had to go home by another way.**

So as we journey, bless our wanderings.

Bless our path.

Walk beside us.

Dance beside us.

**Light our way so that we may follow more faithfully
wherever you lead. Amen!**

WE TELL AND HEAR THE WORD

FOCUS LESSON *Matthew 2:1–12, CEB*

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ²They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

³When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ *You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel.”*

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” ⁹When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was.

¹⁰When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

REFLECTIONS “Words from the Beginning: The Road Isn’t Straight”

Rev. Kimberly P Chastain

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

***SONG OF RESPONSE** “The Road Winds Ever On” (see page 7)

WE SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE *(together)*

Words from the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

**We believe in a with-us God,
a God who is beside us in the mountains and valleys,
holding our hand through every bump and turn.
And in the chaos of our journey,
we believe that God sees
what we cannot always see:
a path home by another way.
Therefore, trusting in this ever-present and guiding God,
we lace up our shoes.
We look for God’s fingerprints in the world.
We trust that there are paths still unexplored,
paths that God has only begun to invite us down.
And like the Magi, we dare to follow.
May it be so, Amen!**

WE OFFER OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

You are invited to support the ministry of this congregation through online giving at upcbgm.org/give, or by sending a check to the church office or putting an offering in the plates by the door.



THE ROAD WINDS e - ver ON



Fears of stray - ing from the path - way Plant - ed deep
All our best laid plans can sha - tter Leav - ing us
A world con - stant - ly in mo - tion E - vades our



in child - hood Come to haunt us when the road ends
to mourn the loss Of the fu - ture we im - a - gined
at - tempts to know What may be a - round the cor - ner



And the way a - head is ob - scured Then the Spi - rit
And feel like our life is on pause At the edge the
Or where a - ny road — will go So the Spi - rit



wraps a - round us To pro - tect and re - as - sure
Spi - rit's wait - ing There to fer - ry us a - cross
stirs with - in us To be car - ried by the flow



And the road winds e - ver on _____

Words: Anna Strickland, © 2024. Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, Plainsong melody, 12th c.
Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC. Free for congregational use.

MUSICAL OFFERING “Behold That Star!” Robert Manners, *vocals*; Rebecca Mebert, *piano*

Refrain: Behold that star! Behold that star up yonder. Behold that star!

(*Response*) It is the star of Bethlehem.

There was no room found in the inn (*Response*) for him who was born free of sin. (*Response*)
The wise men came from the east (*Resp.*) to worship him, Prince of Peace. (*Resp.*) [*Refrain*]

A song broke forth upon the night (*Response*) from angel hosts all robed in white: (*Response*)
“Glory to God, world without end. (*Resp.*) Peace on earth, good will to men.” (*Resp.*) [*Refrain*]

Words and Music: Traditional spiritual; arr. Mark Hayes, © 1998 Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved.
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PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*together*)

Loving God, we know that ministry is not a service we receive at church so much as it is a life-giving work you call us to do with others. Use our gifts and our talents, blended with the gifts and talents of others around the world, to make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. Amen!

WE GO FORTH IN GRATITUDE TO SERVE

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS

***SONG OF SENDING** “See Whose Glory Fills the Skies”

274 See Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Capo 1: (D) Eb (F#m/A) Gm/Bb (D) (Bm) (A7) (D) Eb Cm Bb7 Eb

1 See whose glo - ry fills the skies:
2 Pierce the gloom of sin and grief, Je - sus, the
3 More and more thy - self dis - play,
4 Vis - it, then, this soul of mine,

light of the world! Sun of right - eous -
Scat - ter all my
Shin - ing to the
Fill me, Ra - dian -

The musical score is written for guitar and voice. It features a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The guitar part includes a capo at the first fret and various chord voicings. The vocal line consists of four verses of lyrics. The score is presented in a standard musical notation with a treble clef for the guitar and a bass clef for the voice.

(Daug/F#) Eb aug/G (Bm) Cm (D/A) Eb/Bb (A7) Bb7 (D) Eb

ness, a - rise:
un - be - lief, Je - sus, the light of the world!
per - fect day,
cy di - vine!

Refrain (D) Eb

We'll walk in the light! Beau - ti - ful light! Shine where the

(Bm7) Cm7 (E7) F7 (A7) Bb7 (D) Eb

dew-drops of mer-cy shine bright. Oh, shine all a-round us by

(Gmaj7) Abmaj7 (C7) Db7 (D/A) Eb/Bb (A7) Bb7 (D) Eb (A7) Bb7

Fine last time To verses

day and by night, Je - sus, the light of the world.

Words: Adapt. from Charles Wesley, "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies," *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1740; additional text, refrain, and Music by George D. Elderkin (WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT); arr. Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, © 2000 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727560. All rights reserved.

BLESSING

by John O'Donohue

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
that is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

In the name of Christ,
our new beginning,
go in peace.

SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

SENDING MUSIC (*together*) "See Whose Glory Fills the Skies" refrain (see page 9)

(Please exchange a greeting of peace with those around you as our worship concludes.)

*After the service, everyone is invited to join us downstairs in Fellowship Hall
for a time of fellowship and refreshments.*

Get Involved! Without any doubt, the ministry of our congregation depends largely on the dedication and selfless contributions of volunteers — the incredible individuals who give generously of their time, energy, and unique talents. Here are some ways you can help us do Christ’s work in our community:

Community Meal & Pantry: Each Tuesday at 5pm, we offer a sit-down meal that is free for anybody, serving about 100 people a week. Volunteers are needed during the day on Monday and Tuesday to help with food preparation, and on Tuesday evening to serve the meal and clean up afterwards.

On Wednesdays from noon to 5pm, we run a free food pantry that also offers personal care & hygiene items when they’re available. Volunteers help staff the pantry, and donations of non-perishable food and personal care items are always welcome.

Contact Kitchen Coordinator Sherry Conklin for more info: meal@upcbgm.org

Worship services: You may not have noticed how many people are involved in our Sunday morning worship services, but most weeks there are at least a dozen of us, and often there are more than 20: folks who read prayers and scripture, greet visitors, share musical talents, operate technology, set up refreshments, help serve communion, or contribute their ideas and support behind the scenes. If you’d like to take part, contact Worship Team chair Suzie Raboy: sraboy54@stny.rr.com

Music at UPC: Music is an important part of our coming together at United Presbyterian Church. We are excited to make music with every resource that we have, and to use a variety of styles, not all at once but intermingled. What emerges is a vibrant worship service with music that includes everyone who wishes to participate.

UPC Choir: Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30pm in the Music Room (next to the Chapel). The vocal choir provides music for worship most every Sunday. We welcome new members at any time, and we would love to have your participation. It would be good to have you with us!

United Ringers handbell choir: Sundays, 11:30am–12:30pm in the Sanctuary. Our handbell choir plays 2–4 octaves of Malmark handbells and handchimes, providing music for worship about once a month. If you’re interested in learning how to play handbells, please inquire. New members are always welcome! No previous experience needed. No auditions to start. If you can count to 4, you can learn to play!

We also invite instrumentalists and vocalists who’d like to share their gifts to talk with any of our music leaders about providing special music for worship — you can call the church office, email music@upcbgm.org, or speak with them in person after worship.



Other ministries: Our ministry teams are always welcoming new team members. If you’d like to help with or learn more about the workings of the church, talk to one of the pastors or the elders on Session: Campus Ministry, Pastor Becky bkindig@upcbgm.org; Card Committee, Margaret Davis mdavis.margaret@gmail.com; Community Outreach, Pastor Kimberly pastor@upcbgm.org or Sherry Conklin meal@upcbgm.org; Finance, Andy Chadwick cchadwick1@stny.rr.com; Hospitality, Sally Hunt shunt1@stny.rr.com or Sherry Conklin meal@upcbgm.org; Personnel, Cindy Burger csburger@frontiernet.net; Property, Pastor Becky bkindig@upcbgm.org; Sewing Group, Cindy Burger csburger@frontiernet.net.

Gathering at the Lord's Table — Our Communion Elements



We are celebrating communion during our worship service today. Our communion bread is gluten-free, and our shared cup is cherry juice, so that all may partake of the same elements during our communion. Please speak to one of the technicians at the back of the sanctuary if this creates any difficulties for you.

Children in Worship: “Let the little children come to me...” —Matthew 19:14

We are glad that your children are here today, and we hope that you know that they are welcome and encouraged to be in worship with you. We truly believe that a community of faith is made up of people of ALL ages. There is a PrayGround space with coloring sheets and quiet toys in the front of the sanctuary to use there or can be taken to another pew, if that suits your family's needs. Sunday school materials are mailed to our families once a month to do together at home.



There is also a nursery space at the end of the hall at the front of the sanctuary that is open for use with a parent or guardian. It has a changing table, a rocking chair, and some toys appropriate for age two and under. There is a speaker in the room so you can listen to the service. Please let us know if you have questions.

COVER IMAGE: “The Road Isn’t Straight” quilt square, logo, and design commissioned by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRAYER CREDITS: “Close to Home”, “From Generation to Generation...”, “How does a weary world rejoice?”, and “Words from the Beginning” prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.
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Pastors Rev. Kimberly P Chastain and Rev. Becky Kindig ~ **Reader** Margaret Davis
Musicians Aimée Backus, *Music Coordinator*; Rebecca Mebert, *accompanist*;
Austin Shadduck, *United Ringers director*; Andrea Gilebarto, Robert Manners,
and Starletta Noll-Long ~ **Technicians** Scott Kindig, Sara Lieberman, Ken Mebert