

WORDS

FOR THE BEGINNING

— THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT —



Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

2nd Sunday of Christmas/ Epiphany

January 5, 2025

WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING

FIELD NOTES

With tears in your eyes,
you name all the bumps
and zigzags your life has taken.
With clenched teeth
and a hummingbird pulse,

you wake up
and wonder—how did I get here?
In the last 40 days of
desert wandering, you say
you haven't heard God's voice once.
You say you miss when God was close,
when God used to sing the harmony line.
So you yell at the sky,
begging God to drop a pin,
to name the road,
to draw you a map.
You lament the way this life isn't easy.
You ask me—was the road ever straight and narrow,
or was that all a lie?
But then you crest the mountain,
and I don't hear from you for a while,
because God was growing
in the lilac field
on the other side of the hill.
God was scattered
among the pebbles
of the road you never planned to take.
Isn't it amazing, you say,
there are a million roads home
and God walks every single one of them.

Poem by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRELUDE

Trevor Thornton

BRINGING THE LIGHT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Vince Leseney

How did you get here?

Left side of the room: I walked, eyes looking up, following the star.

Right side of the room: I ran, lunging for a love that is bigger than me.

Left side of the room: I tumbled and fell, tender step after tender step.

Right side of the room: I ambled like a river, caught up in God's flow.

I crawled, kissing the earth below me.

Tell me again. How did you get here?

I am here by God's grace and love's pull.

Welcome home.

This is God's house.

There is room for you here.

Let us worship our gracious God.

*SONG OF PRAISE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hymnal, No. 119

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

Let us pray:

God of new beginnings,

**We admit that we often follow the well-worn path,
simply because others have been there before.**

Sometimes this is holy and humble,

but there are days when a new path needs to be tread.

**On those new-beginning days, O God,
give us the courage to follow your star.
Give us the courage to go home by another way.
Give us the courage to kick up some dust and walk in a new direction
for the sake of justice, love, and neighbor.
For when you are doing a new thing, we want to have the courage to fol-
low.
With hope in our hearts we wander, we travel.
Amen.**

(Time of silent reflection)

Hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:

**Regardless of the path we travel,
of how lost we may get,
or the twists and turns along the way,
we do not walk alone.
We are loved.
We are forgiven.
We have every chance to begin again.
Thanks be to God for a love like that!**

*THE PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

*SONG OF RESPONSE Angels We Have Heard on High (Refrain) Hymnal, No. 113

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 43:16-21

Page No. 586

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-12

Page No. 783

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

The Road Isn't Straight

Tracy L. Evans

SONG OF FAITH

Still, Still, Still

Hymnal No. 124

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**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.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, p. 35

*Please pray the Lord's Prayer
in the language and wording most familiar to you.*

THE OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Creator of the Stars of Night, (verse 4)
To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be,
From age to age eternally. Amen.

Hymnal, No. 84

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Hymnal No. 132

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. You may also indicate interest in membership by checking the appropriate column in the ritual of friendship booklet. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for January 5: Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12; Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21; Ephesians 1:3-14 ; John 1:(1-9), 10-18.

The Food & Shelter items of the month for January are sandwich crackers and granola bars. **Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.**

119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king,
 2 Christ, by high - est heaven a-dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 late in time be-hold him come, off-spring of the vir-gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the in-car-nate de - i - ty,
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with the an - gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man - u - el.
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

Still, Still, Still

124

1 Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill! The vir - gin's
2 Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slum - ber deep while an - gel

ten - der arms en - fold - ing, warm and safe the child are hold - ing.
hosts from heaven come wing - ing, sweet - est songs of joy are sing - ing.

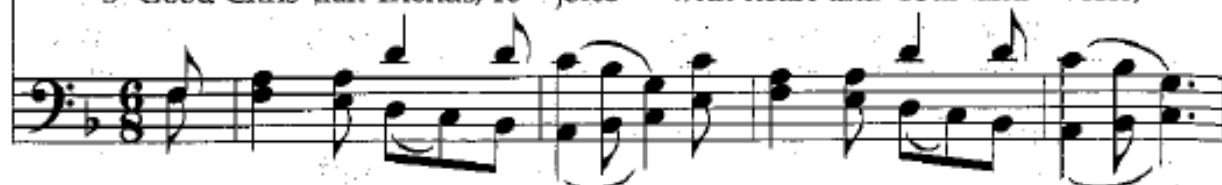
Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.
Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slum - ber deep.

8

132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



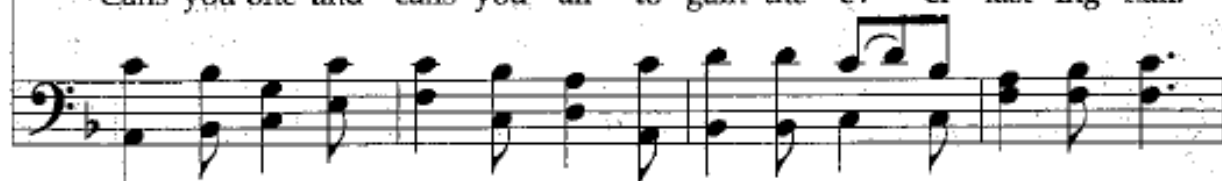
1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

