

# Church on the Hill

A Congregation of the  
Reformed Church in America  
167-07 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Flushing, NY 11358

**January 7, 2024**

**10:30 AM**



Photo Credit: Emerson Chen Photography

**Rev. Kimberley Trinidad — Guest Preacher**

**Mr. Sean Cotty — Music Director**

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

**BOLD** – Congregation responds

\* – Congregation Stands

**Prelude**                      Improvisation on “The March of the Kings”                      Sean Cotty

**Welcome**

\* **Gloria Patri**

***Glory be to the Father,  
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen, Amen.***

**Votum**

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. **Amen.**

**Sentences of Scripture**

**Prayer of Invocation**

Lord, we welcome you in the sanctuary. We welcome you into our minds, into our hearts, and into our spirits. We gather to celebrate you with our worship. We are grateful for your gift of life. Come, Holy Spirit, come! **Amen.**

**Call to Worship**

(From Psalms 47)

Clap your hands, all you nations; **shout to God with cries of joy.** For the Lord Most High is awesome, **the great King over all the earth.** Sing praises to God, sing praises; **sing praises to our King, sing praises.** For God is the King over all the earth; **sing to him a psalm of praise.**

\* **Hymn No. 185 (verses 1-4)**

We Three Kings of Orient Are

**Prayer of Confession**

**Merciful and loving God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We forget to give you the best that we have to offer. Help us to do better at loving you, loving ourselves, and loving our neighbor. Forgive us, we pray, and equip us to experience you in new and exciting ways. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon/God’s Wisdom for Life**

*Clear in the darkness a light shines in Bethlehem:  
Angels are singing, their sound fills the air.  
Wise men have journeyed to greet their Messiah:  
But only a mother and baby lie there.*

*“Ave Maria, Ave Maria:”*

*Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.*

*“Ave Maria, Ave Maria,  
Maiden and mother of Jesus our King.”*

*Where are his courtiers, and who are his people?  
Why does he bear neither sceptre nor crown?  
Shepherd his courtiers, the poor for his people,  
With peace as his sceptre and love for his crown.*

*“Ave Maria, Ave Maria:”*

*Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.*

*“Ave Maria, Ave Maria,  
Maiden and mother of Jesus our King.”*

*What though your treasures are not gold or incense?  
Lay them before him with hearts full of love.  
Praise to the Christ child, and praise to his mother  
Who bore us a Saviour by grace from above.*

*“Ave Maria, Ave Maria:”*

*Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.*

*“Ave Maria, Ave Maria,  
Maiden and mother of Jesus our King.”*

**Prayer of Illumination**

Holy Spirit, open our hearts to receive your Word, reveal to us the good news, and enable us to trust in the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Scripture Readings**

Matthew 6: 25-34

Maureen Saepia-Chen

p. 787-788

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

Rev. Kimberley Trinidad

## \* Confession of Faith

The Apostles' Creed (RCA contemporary version)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
And born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The holy catholic<sup>†</sup> Church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

<sup>†</sup> The word "catholic" means "universal,"  
referring to all followers of Christ worldwide.

## **Anthem**

Selections from "Christus"

Felix Mendelssohn

(I. When Jesus our Lord - II. Say, Where is He Born - III. There Shall a Star)  
Soloists- Brianna Barnhart, Bruce Hoffacker, Steve Hoffacker, Jim Nicholas

*When Jesus, our Lord, was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea;  
Behold, from the east to the city of Jerusalem there came wise men  
and said:*

*Say, where is he born, the king of Judea?  
For we have seen his star,  
And are come to adore him.*

*There shall a Star from Jacob come forth,  
And a Sceptre from Israel rise up,  
And dash in pieces princes and nations.*

*As bright the star of morning gleams,  
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams  
Of light and consolation!*

*Thy Word, O Lord, radiance darting,  
Truth imparting, gives salvation;  
Thine be praise and adoration!*

**\* Doxology**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

**The Communion Service**

**Communion Prayer**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts!

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy and right it is, and our joyful duty to give thanks to you at all times and in all places, O Lord our Creator, almighty and everlasting God! You created heaven with all its hosts and the earth with all its plenty. You have given us life and being, and preserve us by your providence. But you have shown us the fullness of your love in sending into the world your Son, Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, made flesh for us and for our salvation. For the precious gift of this mighty Savior who has reconciled us to you we praise and bless you, O God. With your whole Church on earth and with all the company of heaven we worship and adore your glorious name singing:



**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!**

Most righteous God, we remember in this Supper the perfect sacrifice offered once on the cross by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sin of the whole world. In the joy of his resurrection and in expectation of his coming again, we offer ourselves to you as holy and living sacrifices. Together we proclaim the mystery of the faith:

**Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread which we break and the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Grant that, being joined together in him, we may attain to the unity of the faith and grow up in all things into Christ our Lord. And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf, and these grapes from many hills into one cup, grant, O Lord, that your whole Church may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

### **The Communion—Words of Institution**

*(We partake of the Bread.)*

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

*(We partake of the Cup.)*

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

### **Thanksgiving after Communion**

Brothers and sisters, since the Lord has now fed us at his Table, let us praise God's holy name with heartfelt thanksgiving! Bless the Lord, O my soul, **and all that is within me, bless his holy name.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, **and do not forget all his benefits—**

Who forgives all your iniquity, **who heals all your diseases,**

Who redeems your life from the Pit, **who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.**

The Lord is merciful and gracious, **slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

He does not deal with us according to our sins, **nor repay us according to our iniquities.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, **so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;**

As far as the east is from the west, **so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

As a father has compassion for his children, **so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him,**

Who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, and will also give us all things with him. **Therefore shall my mouth and heart show forth the praise of the Lord, from this time forth forevermore. Amen.** (From Psalm 103, with additions)

## Prayers of the People

### *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 trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the Kingdom and the power  
And the glory, forever. Amen.**

\* **Hymn No. 159**

Sing We Now of Christmas

\* **Benediction**

**Response** (please be seated)

Final Choral from "There Shall A Star" (How Brightly Shines the Morning Star)  
Felix Mendelssohn

*As bright the star of morning gleams,  
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams  
Of light and consolation!  
Thy Word, O Lord, radiance darting,  
Truth imparting, gives salvation;  
Thine be praise and adoration!*

**Postlude**

Trio Sonata No. 4 in E Minor (I. Adagio-Vivace)

J.S. Bach

## Music Notes

Music Notes introduced John Rutter (1945-) in the December Beacon edition and we again turn to him for today's anthem, *Christmas Lullaby*, for which he wrote both the music and the text. Rutter uses the same structure for *Lullaby* as for our Christmas Eve offering of *Candlelight Carol*. The women's voices begin; singing as angels. The men then enter as the wise men. All voices join together for the chorus combining reverence for Mary and her baby. The second verse focuses on the baby in the manger. The third verse calls on all to worship the child with, "...hearts full of love."

Last June, Music Notes highlighted some of the remarkable elements of the life of the composer of *Say, Where is He*, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). Today we will focus on this anthem which is comprised of multiple pieces. Mendelssohn began working on what he intended as his Christmas oratorio, *Christus*, in 1846 but had only completed a few sections and fragments when he died in 1847. The first three existing sections are our anthem this morning: the recitative "When Jesus our Lord"; the trio of wise men "Say, Where is He Born"; and the chorus "There Shall a Star." Let's focus on the scriptural basis for the text of the chorus. Numbers 24 is part of the story of Balaam and is known as "Balaam's Fourth Oracle." In verse 17, Balaam prophesied that, "...a star from Jacob..." will come and rabbinic scholars tell us that the "star" refers to the Davidic line. The reference to "scepter" is to make clear that this "star" will be the Messiah King. (N.B., In verse two of *Christmas Lullaby*, Rutter notes the absence of a scepter and crown for the newborn Messiah but recognizing the power of the new King identifies, "...peace as his scepter and love for his crown.") Mendelssohn's librettist then skips to Psalm 2:9. Verses 1-6 describe threats to God's kingdom and in verses 7-9 God's anointed has been given rule over all the earth and the power to "...dash in pieces princes and nations." In the Numbers story, verse 17 continues with the prophecy that the "star" will "crush" Israel's enemies. But while the Psalmist acknowledges the Messiah King's power to "dash in pieces", that power is not being used – rather the point is that it would be useless or foolish to stand against the way of God.

## Announcements

### COFFEE HOUR

Please join us for coffee hour to enjoy some special King Cake after the service, downstairs in Gessner Hall.

### OFFERING

If you feel called to give, offering plates are located in the rear of the sanctuary, where you can leave your offering upon entry or exit of the sanctuary.



## BARGAIN BOUTIQUE

The Bargain Boutique is open on Saturdays from 10 am- 1 pm. Donations are accepted on Saturdays only. \*We are unable to accept: Electronics, TVs, Furniture, Textbooks, and Large Toys/Stuffed Animals\*

## JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST!

Be sure to sign up for our email list to keep up with the latest Church on the Hill happenings through the weekly email and the Beacon. A sign-up form can be found on **[churchonthehill.org](http://churchonthehill.org)**

## Prayer Requests

*If you would like to add a loved one to the prayer list, or if your loved one no longer needs to be on the prayer list, please contact the church office at [office@churchonthehill.org](mailto:office@churchonthehill.org)*

Karin Bennett

The Bermudez Family

Diane Blagburn

Katie and Clayton Buckley

The Cappellano Family

Richard D.

Thomas Degnen

Gabriel DeMelo

Lucas Ditta

Jim Doliner

Joanne Dunckhahn

The Family of Randy Eastman

Alison Friedman

Adam Gonzalez

The Greer Family

Rudy Jakob

Mary and Norman Kansfield

Susan Laurita

Donna Lemay

Gessa Markantonis

Rose McLain

Kathy Mendler-Murphy

Paul Mobius

Mary Moder

Marti and Tom Pearce

The Family of Rev. Bob Perless

Iris and Ralph Prager

Patrick Sullivan

Ed Surujballi

Virginia Young



The sanctuary is looped for the hard of hearing. In order to connect to the system, please sit in the north set of pews (on your right when you enter the sanctuary) and set your hearing device to the "T" setting.



Nancy Gessner, Victor Han, **Vice Presidents**  
Nancy Gessner, **Clerk**

*Consistory & Staff*

**Elders**

- Linda Diez
- Nancy Gessner (VP)
- Victor Han (VP)
- Rhoda Jabbour
- Sarah White

**Deacons**

- Ginny Chan
- Emerson Chen
- Jerry Lutz
- Adriene Toy

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## **KING CAKES: A BRIEF HISTORY**

As part of our Christian faith, the coming of the wise men bearing gifts to the Christ Child is celebrated twelve days after Christmas. We refer to this as the Feast of the Epiphany. Some also know it as Little Christmas, Twelfth Night, or Kings Day. The celebration of this event has evolved over the centuries, with each culture adding its own uniqueness.

One of the traditions that had its roots in Western Europe, is the baking of a "King Cake", in honor of the "Three Kings". For settlers in the U.S., it was part of a family celebration and didn't really take on a public role until after the Civil War, around 1870.

The cakes are round or oval-shaped to symbolize the unity of faiths. Each cake is decorated in purple representing justice, green representing faith, and gold representing power. A small baby, symbolizing the baby Jesus, is traditionally hidden inside each King Cake. Like the Biblical story, the "search for the baby" adds excitement, as each person waits to see in which slice of cake the baby will be discovered. While custom holds that the person who "finds" the baby will be rewarded with "good luck", that person is also traditionally responsible for bringing the King Cake to the next gathering!

The "traditional" King Cake is made from twisted strands of cinnamon dough, covered by poured sugar, and sprinkled with purple, green, and gold-colored sugars.