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Living in Spirit • Committed to Service • Open to All

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
Second Sunday after Christmas

January 4, 2026
10 o'clock

First Church of Christ Congregational
12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 233-9605
www.whfirstchurch.org

To Give Online: <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/give>

First Church's worship services are live streamed every Sunday downstairs in our church library, the John P. Webster Library. Watch church while your toddler plays in our children's area or if you need a separate place to worship for any other reason.

Rev. Fredd Ward, Senior Pastor
Jim Boratko, Director of Worship Arts
Amanda Bethune, Director of Faith Formation

FIRST CHURCH WEST HARTFORD

JANUARY 4, 2026

PRELUDES

How Brightly Shines the Morning Star
Two Carols
Ben Cantor, banjo

Sigfrid Karg-Elert

WELCOME

†CALL TO WORSHIP

Bob Calef

One: In this holy season of Christmas,
Many: Christ comes to us again.
One: In this quiet after the harried days of December,
Many: God invites us to pause and reflect.
One: Our journey has led us here.
Many: The Spirit is with us now.
One: Let us honor the newborn king as did the sages of old.
Many: Let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

†HYMN 176

Sing of God Made Manifest

SALZBURG

†OPENING PRAYER

Creator God, help us embrace the power that comes from love. Guide us along the path that leads to justice and joy. Open our eyes and ears, that we may perceive your wisdom during this time of worship. In the year ahead, open our hearts and minds to the sustaining power and strength of your loving Spirit. We pray these things in your holy name. Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-12(NT p.2)

†RESPONSE (HYMN 172)

Star of Wonder

KINGS OF ORIENT

O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

SERMON

"...having been warned in a dream..."

Rev. Fredd Ward

† Please stand in body or spirit as you are able.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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.

HYMN 161

I Wonder as I Wander

I WONDER AS I WANDER

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

CALL TO OFFERING

As the kings brought their treasures, we are invited to share our gifts. Whether contributing to the offering plate; giving online; or sacrificing time and energy, our gifts are faithful forms of worship. During this time of sharing, may the Spirit move within us and outward toward others.

OFFERTORY

The Shepherds’ Farewell

Hector Berlioz

The First Church Choir

†DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts: Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

†OFFERTORY PRAYER

Gracious God, bless these gifts we bring. May they be as precious today as the treasures that travelers from afar gave to the Christ child long ago. May our gifts honor your name. May our worship reflect the humility in our hearts. May our time and talents bring love and life to your world. Amen.

†HYMN 171

God’s Love Made Visible!

POSADA

BENEDICTION AND RESPONSE

Amen

SPIRITUAL

The First Church Choir

POSTLUDE

Wir Christenleut, BWV 1090
("We Christianfolk")

J. S. Bach

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments following the service!