

Music Blurb for 1-6-19

News and Notes

For Epiphany this year we will sing the standard hymns “We three Kings,” “The first Nowell,” and others. The choir will sing “What Star Is This?”

Sunday Bulletins

The renowned hymnodist Eric Routley called “We Three Kings” the first modern American Christmas carol. The words and music were written by John Henry Hopkins Jr. He was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1820. His father was the first Episcopal Bishop of Vermont, so it’s no surprise that the son graduated from the University of Vermont. He eventually went to General Seminary in New York City and after graduation became the school’s first music teacher. In 1857 he wrote “We Three Kings” for a Christmas pageant for his nieces and nephews (one of which went on to compose the tune for “I sing a song of the saints of God”). It first appeared in print in a Hopkins collection of carols in 1863. It appeared in the first Christmas carol section of an Episcopal hymnal in the 1916 edition. It has remained in our hymnal ever since, and has become a much beloved standard carol both here and in Britain.