

## THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Look Here! Hear!  
January 6 & 7, 2024

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### AS WE GATHER

The Twelve Days of our Christmas celebration have come to an end. But the miraculous birth of the Son of God is only the beginning of the story. For though Jesus came as the fulfillment of all the promises to God's chosen people Israel, the promise to Abraham was clear that by his seed "all the families of the earth" would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). This is the mystery Paul speaks of in Ephesians 3, how "the Gentiles are fellow heirs . . . of the promise in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:6). Anything hidden remains a mystery until it is revealed. No one, Jew or Gentile, can come to faith in Christ without the Gospel being revealed. Another word for "reveal" is "epiphany." So today Matthew uses the word "behold," showing what may seem a surprise to some. "Behold, wise men from the east" (Matthew 2:1). "Behold, the star that they had seen" (Matthew 2:9). Today we say, behold, Christmas is a much bigger thing than many have thought. It encompasses nothing less than all our Lord's earthly ministry culminating in His suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit. It is nothing less than the gift of salvation to all who believe. This epiphany has invaded your darkness through the water and the Word of your Holy Baptism, through the Word of God preached in your hearing, and through the receiving of our Lord's very body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar to sustain that gift, that epiphany of faith to the end of days. By faith you have made a very good beginning.

**Reception of Holy Communion:** If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

### WELCOME

In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said,  
"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding  
and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."  
Luke 10:21

## HANDSHAKES & HUGS

### ✠ PREPARATION ✠

### OPENING HYMN #394 "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"

Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,  
Manifested by the star To the sages from afar,  
Branch of royal David's stem In Thy birth at Bethlehem:  
Anthems be to Thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;  
And at Cana wedding guest In Thy Godhead manifest;  
Manifest in pow'r divine, Changing water into wine;  
Anthems be to Thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole Palsied limbs and fainting soul;  
Manifest in valiant fight, Quelling all the devil's might;  
Manifest in gracious will, Ever bringing good from ill;  
Anthems be to Thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Sun and moon shall darkened be, Stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;  
Christ will then like lightning shine, All will see His glorious sign;  
All will then the trumpet hear, All will see the Judge appear;  
Thou by all wilt be confessed, God in man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord, Present in Thy holy Word  
Grace to imitate Thee now And be pure, as pure art Thou;  
That we might become like Thee At Thy great epiphany  
And may praise Thee, ever blest, God in man made manifest.

(Rise)

### INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: I will go to the altar of God,

**People: to God my exceeding joy.**

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

**People: who made heaven and earth.**

## CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: I confess to almighty God,

**People:** before all the company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed through my fault, through my own fault, through my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray almighty God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son, to have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

Pastor: Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:** Amen.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

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**Refrain:** This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,  
whose blood set us free to be people of God. *Refrain*

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,  
and honor, blessing, and glory are His. *Refrain*

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:  
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. *Refrain*

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.  
This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

## SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, by the leading of a star you made known your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know you by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:** Amen.

(Be seated)

## ☩ WORD ☩

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Isaiah 60:1–6* (The future glory of Israel)

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. <sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. <sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. <sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. <sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

**EPISTLE** *Ephesians 3:1–12* (The mystery of the Gospel revealed)

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—<sup>2</sup>assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup>When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup>which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. <sup>7</sup>Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, <sup>10</sup>so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord

**People: Thanks be to God.**

(Rise)

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Matthew 2:1–12* (The visit of the Wise Men)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the second chapter.

**People: Glory be to you, O Lord.**

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>““And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”” <sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise be to you, O Christ.**

(Be seated)

## CHILDREN’S SONG & CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

### “This Little Gospel Light of Mine”

This little Gospel light of mine, I’m going to let it shine; (x3)  
Let it shine all the time, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel? NO! I’m going to let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine all the time, let it shine.

It will point the way to heaven, I’m going to let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine all the time, let it shine.

### SERMON HYMN #395 “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”

O Morning Star, how fair and bright! You shine with God’s own truth and light,  
A-glow with grace and mercy! Of Jacob’s race, King David’s son,  
Our Lord and master, You have won Our hearts to serve You only!  
Lowly, holy! Great and glorious, All victorious,  
Rich in blessing! Rule and might o’er all possessing!

Come, heav’nly Bridegroom, Light divine, And deep within our hearts now shine;  
There light a flame undying! In Your one body let us be  
As living branches of a tree, Your life our lives supplying.  
Now, though daily Earth’s deep sadness May perplex us  
And distress us, Yet with heav’nly joy You bless us.

Lord, when You look on us in love, At once there falls from God above  
A ray of purest pleasure, Your Word and Spirit,  
flesh and blood Refresh our souls with heav’nly food.  
You are our dearest treasure!  
Let Your mercy Warm and cheer us! O draw near us!  
For you teach us God’s own love through You has reached us.

Almighty Father, in Your Son You loved us when not yet begun  
Was this old earth’s foundation! Your Son has ransomed us in love  
To live in Him here and above: This is Your great salvation.  
Alleluia! Christ the living, To us giving  
Life forever, Keeps us Yours and fails us never!

O let the harps break forth in sound! Our joy be all with music crowned,  
Our voices gladly blending! For Christ goes with us all the way –  
Today, tomorrow, ev'ry day! His love is never ending!  
Sing out! Ring out! Jubilation! Exultation!  
Tell the story! Great is He, the King of Glory!

That joy to know, when life is past, The Lord we love is first and last,  
The end and the beginning! He will one day, oh, glorious grace,  
Transport us to that happy place Beyond all tears and sinning!  
Amen! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Crown of gladness!  
We are yearning For the day of Your returning!

**SERMON**                    **“Led to Worship the Newborn King”**                    Matthew 2:1-12

(Rise)

**NICENE CREED**

**People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.**

**And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.**

(Be seated)

**OFFERINGS** As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**Pastor:** Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God enthroned forever, you love righteousness and hate wickedness. For our sakes, you sent your only begotten Son to suffer the wages of our sin, that we might be holy in your sight. As you have poured grace and salvation upon us, so anoint us also with the oil of gladness and the hope of everlasting life. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Lord of all, you sent your star to lead the wise men of old to come and worship Jesus. As Jesus is truly our greatest treasure, move us by your Spirit to worship Him bringing our gifts of praise, prayer, and offerings for the furtherance of His kingdom. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Holy God, eternal Light, you made Paul a minister according to the gift of your grace. Embolden our pastors to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Bless Pastor Chuck Ferry and family as they serve in the mission field. Open ears to hear and hearts to believe their message that the King of kings has given His life for us. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** Heavenly Father, you prepared a place for your Son, Jesus, in the womb of the Virgin Mary and in the home of Mary and Joseph. Bless our homes and all who dwell in them, that your Word would be heard and your mercy be shown therein. Lord, in your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

**Pastor:** O Lord, bring an end to all threats of violence. Raise up leaders who will act with integrity, pursue justice and follow your commands. Grant to all people the blessings of food, shelter, medical care and safety, and sustain those whose duty it is to protect and defend. Lord, in your mercy,

**People:** hear our prayer.

**Pastor:** Give to the afflicted your comforting presence, relief in their suffering and healing according to your will. Sustain your servants who trust in you especially Roger, Anna, Jim, Eugene, Charlene, Danielle, Marlene, RoseMarie, Dorothy, Janice, Marga, Ardis, Noah, Guy, Mike, Jill, Don, Pat, Janet, Norma, Vern, Amy, Cathy, Cindy, Helga, June, Shirley and Sarah. Give hope to the weary and peace to the dying and patience in their time of affliction. Lord, in your mercy,

**People:** hear our prayer.

**Pastor:** Lord God, you brought the Magi of old to worship your Son, Jesus, and so you have brought us to worship Him also. Receive our gifts and give us Christ in His body and blood, that we may return home according to your holy way. Lord, in your mercy,

**People:** hear our prayer.

**Pastor:** Heavenly Father, you have anointed your Son to be our Savior and have established His throne forever and ever. Grant that we who are called by His name would see His reign spread among all nations; through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:** Amen.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**People:** 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

#### THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

##### PAX DOMINI

**Pastor:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**People:** Amen.

#### AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

(Be seated)

#### DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

##### HYMN #397

##### “As With Gladness Men of Old”

As with gladness men of old Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we Evermore be led by Thee.

As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to Thy lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare At Thy cradle, rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy, Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past, Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;  
There forever may we sing Alleluias to our King.

##### HYMN #400 “Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning”

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining;  
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;  
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,  
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.

Shall we not yield Him, in costly devotion,  
Fragrance of Edom and off'rings divine,  
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure.  
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

#### **HYMN #623 "Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray"**

Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray That we may feast on You today;  
Beneath these forms of bread and wine Enrich us with Your grace divine.

Give us, who share this wondrous food, Your body broken and Your blood,  
The grateful peace of sins forgiv'n, The certain joys of heirs of heav'n.

By faith Your Word has made us bold To seize the gift of love retold;  
All that You are we here receive, And all we are to You we give.

One bread, one cup, one body, we, Rejoicing in our unity,  
Proclaim Your love until You come To bring Your scattered loved ones home.

Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray: O keep us steadfast till that day  
When each will be Your welcomed guest In heaven's high and holy feast.

#### **COMMON DISMISSAL**

(Rise)

#### **POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

#### **BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**People: Amen.**

#### **CLOSING HYMN #411 "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"**

I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.  
In Him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.  
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,  
And show me the way to the Father.  
In Him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart Lord Jesus.

I'm looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.  
When we have run with patience the race,  
We shall know the joy of Jesus.  
In Him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

Preacher  
Liturgist  
Lectors  
Organist

Pastor Harold Bender  
Pastor Josh Grotelueschen  
Russell Hurst, Katie Scepanski, Krystal Wilson  
Deaconess Carole King