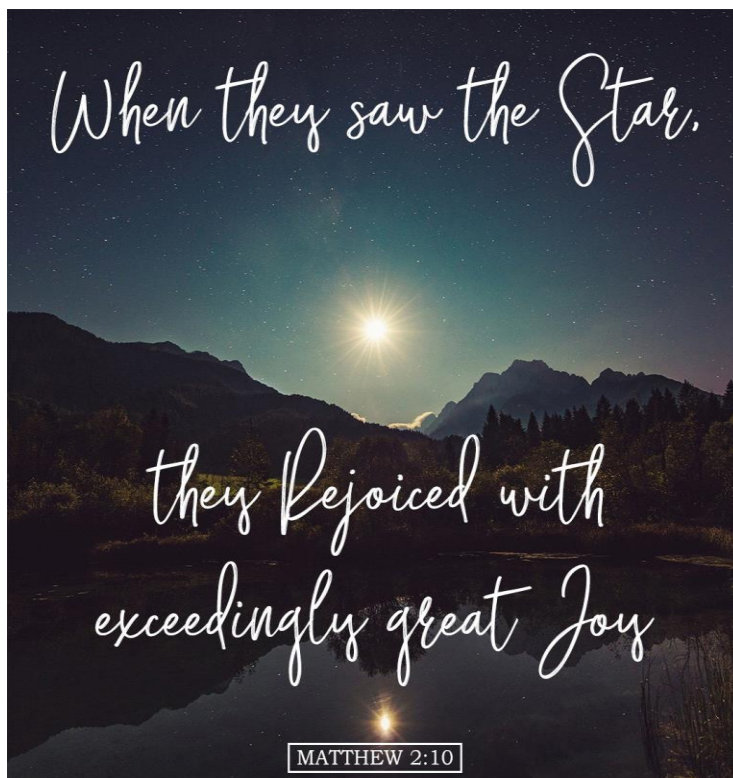


The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Epiphany of Our Lord
January 9, 2022



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with * are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!
- Following the recommendation of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health regarding COVID-19, we ask that you wear a mask for the duration of your time in the building.

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers
Presiding Minister
Organist
Lector
Parish Administrator
Custodian

All People
The Rev. Bradley Ross
Robin Crawford
Bert Zahn\
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush
Vince Besednjak

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Epiphany of Our Lord

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

Prelude *Epiphany Medley* (MAYNARD)

Welcome & Announcements

*Call to Worship

We give thanks on this holy day, adorned with epiphanies:

for the star that led the magi to the manger,

that the nations may see the light of Christ;

for the water turned to wine at Cana’s wedding,

that the people taste the goodness of the Lord;

for the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan,

that the Christ would reveal our ultimate hope.

This is the day that the Lord has made,

we will rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

*Gathering Hymn *Arise, Your Light Has Come*

ELW #314

*Greeting

God who sent the Light into our world,

God who shone in the Bethlehem manger,

God who spreads the Spirit’s rays, be with you all!

And also with you.

Hymn of Praise *Brightest and Best of the Stars*

ELW #303

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, the radiance of all faithful people, you brought the nations to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all the world through him who is the true light and the bright morning star, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Isaiah 60:1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

¹Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A 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 proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

(The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below)



Antiphon: All kings shall bow down before him. (Ps. 72:11)

- ¹Give the king your jus- | tice, O God,
and your righteousness to | the king's son;
- ²**that he may rule your | people righteously
and the | poor with justice;**
- ³that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people,
and the | hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴**Let him defend the needy a- | mong the people,
rescue the poor, and crush | the oppressor. *Antiphon***
- ⁵May he live as long as the sun and | moon endure,
from one generation | to another.
- ⁶**Let him come down like rain upon | the mown field,
like showers that wa- | ter the earth.**
- ⁷In his time may the | righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall | be no more.
- ¹⁰**May the kings of Tarshish and of the | isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba | offer gifts. *Antiphon***
- ¹¹May all kings bow | down before him,
and all the nations | do him service.
- ¹²**For the king delivers the poor who cry out | in distress,
the oppressed, and those who | have no helper.**
- ¹³He has compassion on the low- | ly and poor,
and preserves the lives | of the needy.
- ¹⁴**From oppression and violence he re- | deems their lives,
and precious is their blood | in his sight. *Antiphon***

Second Lesson

Ephesians 3:1-12

What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.

¹This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

*Gospel Acclamation *The First Noel*

Verses 1 & 2

ELW #300

*Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

The Gospel according to Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord!

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

*Gospel Acclamation *The First Noel*

Verses 3 & 4

ELW #300

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *As With Gladness Men of Old*

ELW #302

***Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

* Prayers of Intercession

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and children of God throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God of wanderers, you sent the magi from afar to witness the mystery and majesty of your birth among us. So, send us, as the Covenant family, into your world you still love with your passionate care in our hearts. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You continue to shape heaven and earth. Holy Spirit, may your all-encompassing passion still beautify the cosmos. Bless the stars that guide our way and the night sky that invites the earth into slumber. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You sent the magi to follow the star into an uncertain future. May all leaders and peoples seek your face, especially when paths are not clear, conflicts rage, tyrants oppress, and fear abounds. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Holy Spirit, you dwelled with Paul in prison itself. Strengthen those who are facing pain and anguish of any kind. Give courage and wisdom for building roads that lead to justice and freedom. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You sent the holy family to seek safety in a new land. Protect all who make similar journeys. Guide asylum seekers, refugees, and all who journey toward safety. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your glory is shown to the saints. We give thanks for those whose earthly journey has ended and now dwell with you forever. Give us signs of your continual presence until that day when we arise in you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen!**

* Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And al - so with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Almighty Lord,
 we praise your shining light, your glowing grace.
 From before the earth's foundation,
 you loved us and promised us life forever.
 Within the earth's deep struggle,
 we laud your great and glorious might.
 Despite our tears and shortcomings,
 we sing of the gladness of your mercy.

We praise your Son, our Morning Star.
 our treasure dear.
 He is our living Savior who has redeemed us in love.
 He keeps us yours and fails us never—
 today, tomorrow, and every day.

On the night he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks,
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Holy Spirit, refresh our souls with this heavenly food.
Nourish us as branches of your tree,
and enlighten us with your undying flame.

We sing out to the Father, we ring out to the Son,
we exult in the Holy Spirit.
Empower us in our yearning,
and be for us the end and the beginning,
our purest pleasure, our victorious crown,
our never-ending love.
And so, we pray and praise: **Amen!**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning* (BENDER)

Prayer after Communion

O Lord, you look upon us in love
and refresh our souls through the gifts of bread and wine.
Send us out, reflecting the light of your grace,
to tell the story of Jesus Christ,
our bright morning star.

Amen!

*Blessing

Beloved children of God, what came into being in Christ was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
The light of Christ ✠ shine on you with grace and mercy
and fill you with joy and peace!

Amen!

*Sending Hymn *Bright and Glorious is the Sky*

ELW #301

*Dismissal

Go in peace, guided by the light of Christ!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *The First Nowell* (WYTON)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Vince Besednjak, Bob Buettner, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Jen Jones Malensek, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Don Rusher Jr, Veronica Shainoff, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family, the Peypo family. Rebecca, Jessica & Noel Shriver & Jane Skowronski at the death of her brother Noel Shriver.

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 12/24 & 26/2021: \$2536.75

General Fund receipts for week ending 1/2/2022: \$1572.25

Lectionary Blog: God Reunites and Welcomes

[Today,] we celebrate by remembering and looking forward to the radical inclusivity of Jesus' kingdom. The story of the magi coming to visit Jesus is famous and associated with the Christmas story, but I love how the other lectionary readings paint an even fuller picture of the reconciliation that comes with the birth and reign of Jesus.

The Isaiah passage lists people, as represented by national animals, who will stream to the new Light that the Lord will cause to shine upon the reconstituted people of Israel (Isaiah 60:1, 3). The "camels" of Midian, Ephah and Sheba will come, bringing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praise of the Lord (Isaiah 60:6). The people in view lived in today's Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen and Somalia, roughly. I remember my first trip to Oman, scraping the resin that is made into frankincense from the gnarled trees, and thinking what a long journey the sticky sap, and the people who carried it, must have made across the Arabian peninsula to where it was sold in the Levant (Exodus 30:34, Leviticus 2:1). Instead of economic motivation, Isaiah looked forward to a day when people would come to worship God.

The next verse, not part of the lectionary, adds that Kedar and Nebaioth (both of whom were central Arabian tribes) will also join the procession to minister, and they will be fully acceptable in God's house (Isaiah 60:7). The Psalm reading for this week also spoke

of the rulers Sheba and Seba coming to bring gifts and bow before God's anointed king (Psalm 72:10-11).

Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Seba, Kedar and Nebaioth were all descendants of Abraham, but through Hagar (Genesis 25:13) and Keturah (Genesis 25:2-4), rather than Sarah. Abraham had sent all his other descendants away from Isaac so they would not share his inheritance. In time, these tribes had become followers of other gods and the Israelites' mortal enemies. But God, through the dawning of the Light, gathered together what man had separated. Abraham sent away his sons, but God gathers together all God's children.

But God, through the dawning of the Light, gathered together what man had separated. Abraham sent away his sons, but God gathers together all God's children. The lectionary passages argue that these people will sojourn to meet God, not because of great majesty, but because of justice and righteousness (Psalm 72:1-2). God's anointed leader will defend the poor, give deliverance to the needy and crush their oppressor (Psalm 72:3, 11-14). For the psalmist, the most attractive aspect of the ruler of the kingdom of heaven is not wealth or even power, but the righteous protection and provision received of the poor, and the justice meted out to those who oppress them. This is the kingdom we pray to come when we ask for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So, then, we turn to a modest dwelling in Bethlehem. After the census was over and everyone else went home, Joseph, Mary and Jesus had finally moved from their semiprivate and relatively warm stable (think of an insulated garage) and had been welcomed into the guestroom/*kataluma* (note that Luke's Gospel uses a different word, *pandeion* for "inn" in 10:34). This room would have been overflowing during the census with Joseph's extended family, but available after they left. The family had come in from the stable to the main house, but they are still by no means wealthy, powerful or important from an earthly perspective.

But magi, Zoroastrian religious professionals, showed up to this humble home bearing gifts fit for a king. The scene must have been utterly incongruous as their wealth and foreign appearance clashed with the holy family's local modesty. The magi represented the firstfruits of fulfillment of prophecies from Isaiah and Psalms that people from east of the Holy Land would travel to see the ruler of God's kingdom. They visited Herod, that great builder and influential client of the Romans, but only to ask him for directions to the child who would proclaim peace, neighbor-love, humility and allegiance to God's kingdom over earthly powers. He would be killed by the empire for doing so. The magi

came to honor a humble child, not a wealthy and influential tyrant. The readings this week could not be clearer about how to think about Epiphany. God reunites and welcomes the people whom humans have sent away. God attracts not through wealth or power, but through justice and righteousness on behalf of the poor and needy. The fulfillment of God’s will as spoken through the prophet is when people who come from different ethnic, national and even religious backgrounds are welcomed and appreciated at the end of their holy journeys.

Originally published December 31, 2018, on LivingLutheran.org, where you may find the latest Lectionary Blog as well as other resources for the journey of faith.

Cory Driver is an ELCA missionary serving as the director of graduate studies at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo (Egypt).

Jesus, the Light of the World



1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, Je - sus, the Light of the world;
 2 Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; Je - sus, the Light of the world;
 3 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Je - sus, the Light of the world;
 4 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Je - sus, the Light of the world;



“Glo - ry to the new-born king,” Je - sus, the Light of the world.
 join the tri - umph of the skies; Je - sus, the Light of the world.
 Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord! Je - sus, the Light of the world.
 Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness! Je - sus, the Light of the world.

Refrain



We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mer-cy are bright.



Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Je - sus, the Light of the world.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, stanzas; George D. Elderkin, 1845–1928, refrain
 Music: WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT, Traditional; arr. George D. Elderkin