

Epiphany of Our Lord
Sunday, January 5, 2025

Introduction to the day

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: 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.

PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

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

SECOND READING: 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.

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.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD - Overwhelmed with Joy

Epiphany means “a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being.” On Epiphany we give thanks to God that Jesus, king of the Jews, was born to become Savior of all. Salvation sounds like good news, doesn’t it? However, in today’s gospel reading we learn that Jesus’ nativity caused fear in King Herod and all of Jerusalem. Why?

People oppose change for many reasons. They fear the loss of personal power or resources. They are reluctant to shift the way things have always been done. They are concerned about financial, personal, or societal costs. Any of these reactions might have been at work in the royal court.

It says something about the wise men, that they left everything when Jesus’ star rose in the East and were “overwhelmed with joy” (Matthew 2:10) upon finding Jesus and his mother. This is another possible response to change.

Although the wise travelers did not know everything about Jesus, they were open to being led by God, excited by new possibilities, and willing to pour out the treasures of their time, talent, and money for the opportunity to kneel at Jesus' feet.

Today we are invited into an Epiphany experience! The Holy Spirit is out ahead of us, blowing through the neighborhood, revealing Jesus in words and deeds. How can we follow God into the world? Where might we catch sight of Jesus and partner with him in the work God is already doing? How can we worship outside the church building? And how can our enthusiasm, our overwhelming joy, ease the fear of others who are more uncertain about change?

Jesus' incarnation was the greatest change to ever come into the world. In this season of Epiphany, how might you embrace the change necessary to bring the gospel to all of your neighbors for the sake of Christ?

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

Your glory fills the earth. Bless the work of all who engage in dialogue with people of other traditions and faiths such as the Eganville Ministerial. Bridge our differences with a shared mission of revealing your boundless love to the world. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Restore the glory of creation. Send rain to water-parched lands. Revive ecosystems and habitats threatened by a changing climate, and protect the peoples and creatures who live in them. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Give the rulers your justice and reveal your righteousness to those who govern. Frustrate the plans of tyrants and oppressors. Encourage the work of community organizers and activists who speak out against injustice. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Help those who have no helper. Draw near to those who have no one to advocate for them or those who feel forgotten. Comfort those suffering in body, mind and soul. Deliver those who call to you especially Linda Boland, Sandra Gagnon, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Claude Jeannotte, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Ron Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Denita Wolfgram, Elaine Yourth, Harold Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. Precious are they in your sight. In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Liberate this congregation from a yearning for the past that forgets the future. Fuel in us a passion for discovery. Give us the boldness to dream and to imagine our ministries in new and different ways. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for your holy ones who now rest in your radiant glory. Today, we remember our brothers Ken Fulford and Pastor Larry Ehrhardt. Make us, with them, sharers in the boundless riches of Christ, our hope and promise. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

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The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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