

Prayers and Reflections Epiphany – January 4th, 2026

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.

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.

In This Kind of Time

Make no mistake: The world with the guiding star from the east, where covert seekers of signs traveled by night vision, desperate to find a child king, was not a mockup for mantelpiece arrangements swaddled in soft light; not a trio of characters auditioning for some future, twinkling-light Christmas pageant or a living-nativity reenactment. That world was a troubled world, a desperate world, an unfair and brutal world, where wealth bought power, and where ruthlessness and fear danced a deadly tango. It was a world under empire; a world choked by Herod; a world of injustice and occupation, threats and massacre, of fragile hope and cementing anger.

In such a world, during such a time, came some traveling souls. Seeking. Searching. Pursuing. Risking. Wanting. Needing. Offering. Bravely daring a heavenly light to fail them. “We have come to pay him homage,” they confessed. Homage to one who was destined to be shepherd among the lowly, voice for the muted, provider for the hungry, mender for the worn-out, embrace for the dejected, but loser in the eyes of the empire. In other words, these travelers were defying the empire of greatness, denying its lies, and challenging its supremacy. They followed that strident light to offer gifts and to offer themselves, among lowliness.

In secret, the weight of empire wobbles. Herod plots. The powers conspire. A king is frightened. In such a time . . . Epiphany happens! This awakening breaks forth—this fulgent way of seeing, this vision of God’s direction in the now and the here; in this world, in yours, in theirs; in those

circumstances and ours—a startling, unremitting shaft, or a motioning illumination, to beckon God's beloved people, God's treasured creation, out of darkness by another road. Epiphany, in this kind of time.

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSIONS

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

Repairer of the breach, you separate us from our sin and unite us with one another. Heal the animosity in our hearts, and bind us together in love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Author of life, you sent your spirit over the waters, your breath into your children, and guiding stars across the sky. Awaken us to the plight of the planet and send us to care for your creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Light that leads the way, you make yourself known to the nations. Illuminate just paths and guide leaders in the church and the world in your holy will (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Voice of the silenced, you cast the mighty from their thrones and fill the hungry with good things. Grant those in need the courage to demand equality and those with abundance the wisdom to share. Respond to any who call out in need this day We especially pray for We especially pray for Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Barbara Kant, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Proclaimer of promises, you raise up prophets and messengers in the places we least expect. Equip us to listen well to those who bring both good news and painful truths. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Redeemer of the saints, you gift us with many people throughout our lives who point the way to you. We give you thanks for the recently departed and all who have loved us (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

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 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.

BENEDICTION (LBW p. 130)

The Lord bless us and keep us.
The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us.
The Lord look upon us with favor and give us peace.
Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sunday, January 4th - Epiphany
10:30 AM – Grace – Holy Communion

Monday, January 5th
9:00 to 3:00 – Grace Quilters
4:00 - Confirmation

Tuesday, January 6th
10:30 AM – Grace Bible Study
1:30 – Grace Ladies Aid Meeting

Thursday January 8th
9:00 – 11:30 – Toy Bus
1:00 – Grace Music and Worship Meeting

Sunday, January 11th – Baptism of our Lord
10:30 AM – Grace – Holy Communion