

THREE KINGS DAY WORSHIP/ EPIPHANY CELEBRATION

January 6 & 10, 2021

GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL TO WORSHIP:

L: The Magi waited and watched, knowing something wondrous would be happening.

P: We waited for the birth of Jesus; now something wondrous is about to take root.

L: The darkness that invaded all lives was banished by the light of that star.

P: The darkness what surrounds us is gone!

L: Let us celebrate the bright shining of God's love in our lives.

P: Let us become those who will bring the light of God's love to others. AMEN.¹

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord of living light, we hear the story of the Magi and tie it together with our warm Christmas celebration. It feels comfortable to us. Break those bonds of comfort and help us to realize the risk of witness and discipleship for those who follow your light. Shine brightly in us and through us. Forgive the blindness we so often offer to you. Give us vision of what you would have us be and do in the Light of Your Love. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Light has come to you. Your light has come and it has erased the darkness. Now we can walk and work in the light. You are loved by God and called to God's service. AMEN.²

GATHERING SONG *Arise, Your Light Has Come!* (ELW 314)

¹ <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3476/worship-connection-epiphany-sunday-option-2>

² Ibid.

Arise, Your Light Has Come!

1 A - rise, your light has come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
2 A - rise, your light has come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
3 A - rise, your light has come! All you in sor - row born,
4 A - rise, your light has come! The moun - tains burst in song!

show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.
pro - claim the cap - tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.
bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825-1893

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Words

Arise, Your Light Has Come!

1 Arise, your light has come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God
which shines on you today.

2 Arise, your light has come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,

good tidings to the poor.

3 Arise, your light has come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the brokenhearted ones
and comfort those who mourn.

4 Arise, your light has come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing,
God's pow'r will make us strong.

GREETING (ELW p. 120)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 124)

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

A reading from Isaiah.

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.

1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. 2 For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. 3 Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. 4 Lift 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. 5 Then 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. 6 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 proclaim the praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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

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

1 Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king's son;

2 **that he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;**

3 that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

4Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor. R

5May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.

6Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.

7In his time may the righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

10May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute, and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. R

11May all kings bow down before him, and all the nations do him service.

12For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress, the oppressed, and those who have no helper.

13He has compassion on the lowly and poor, and preserves the lives of the needy.

14From oppression and violence he redeems their lives, and precious is their blood in his sight.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:1-12

A reading from Ephesians.

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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

DELIVERY OF GIFTS BY THE KINGS AND CHILDREN'S SERMON

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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: 6‘And 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.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON (ELW p. 125)

Happy 3 Kings Day!

This day, in most Lutheran traditions, is often downplayed. By this point, we often partied ourselves out with Christmas and New Years and we are ready to face the music, so to speak, and head back to work. I love, though, that in the middle of things returning “to normal” we get this final burst of joy with the arrival of the 3 Kings.

Growing up, starting Christmas Eve, three wooden figurines would start traveling around the balcony of the sanctuary of the church starting on Christmas Eve as a reminder that the kings had started their travels towards Jesus. Later, as I connected to hispanic traditions, I was introduced to the Dia de los Tres Reyes Magos. In many parts of Latin America, kids will place shoeboxes with straw for the horses or camels, whichever animal might carry the kings. In place of the straw, a gift will be left. Some cultures release balloons and receive gifts. At any rate, for many cultures, this is the day where the children receive their gifts because Jesus received his gifts- gold, frankincense and myrrh - from the kings.

In Lutheran traditions, the Christmas story told by the Gospel of Matthew tends to be pretty overlooked. We read time and time again about the Shepherds, the version of the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke, but the story of the 3 kings is often downplayed because most of our cultures do not have a 3 kings celebration. So, I propose we add this because the 3 kings have so much to teach us.

First, the 3 Kings (or magi, or maybe even astrologers, or maybe more than 3 of them- as we gain very little detail about who these individuals were.... whoever and however many there are... Tradition has caused us to believe they were 3 kings, but we do not know for sure. It is a

mystery of the text) they are a great model of stewardship. There is no sense of obligation for them. The don't begrudgingly come with gifts. They bring their best- gold, frankincense and myrrh. We hear no reports that they thought something bad would happen if they didn't bring gifts. They simply wanted to honor the King. So, they went through great lengths, traveled a far distance and even worked to deceive a jealous king, Herod, in order to share their treasures with the king. As we start a new year as individuals and as a church, what lesson can we learn from the stewardship displayed by the kings? When we give, are we giving out of fear? Are we afraid that if we don't give something bad will happen to the church or that others will look down on us, or are we giving out of joy? Are we giving whatever we have left over after fulfilling all of our wants and filling our schedules with other activities and obligations, or are we saving some of our very best- our time, our talents and our treasures- in service to the newborn King? Do we give and share with the King, the church, and the world, only when it is convenient, or are we willing to go through great lengths to share our blessings? Are we giving out of joy? In my last congregation, we would often fill the offering plate with pieces of paper on 3 Kings Day in order to remind ourselves that we were more than just receiving gifts and celebrating that day (which was the tradition of many in that church), but, also, that we all had gifts to share with the king too. We would write down pledges of ways we would share our time, talent and resources with others, the church and the world. I always loved looking at the overflowing plates of gifts and talents that people realized they could share with others. Well, with our services being drive in, filling the offering plate is harder and certainly less visual. But, the truth is that I don't need to see the overflowing abundance of gifts and talents to share. I know they are there! Later, I'll invite you to write down a gift/talent/treasure you have to share with the church or the community. I invite you to put that somewhere to remind you of your calling to be like the kings.

Likewise, throughout the world, this is a day of joy. I know for many of us, the joy can feel a little bit over with these days. Done with Christmas. Done with New Years. Done with winter break. Back to the daily grind. But, this day of joy reminds us that Christ is always entering into our world to bring us hope and joy. That is the meaning of Christmas, that Christ enters into our heartache and hardship to bring us hope and joy. Thanks be to God that we get this final reminder of this truth.

Last, but surely not least, I think there is a Christian tendency to always identify ourselves with the "ideal" characters of stories. We are the disciples, not the pharisees... we are the Israelites not Pharaoh and the Egyptians, etc. With this passage, we tend to identify ourselves with the 3 kings or magi... but it's important to remember that there is, actually, a 4th king, Herod. Herod is often excluded from most Christmas plays (though I am proud to say we included him this year, and Matthew did a great job in the portrayal) but Herod, too, has something to teach us. More than most of us want to admit, there is a part of ourselves that is like Herod. Herod was afraid, and his fear shaped his actions in a horrible way. Herod was afraid and jealous of the new baby king. He didn't want to lose power. He didn't want to lose control. He didn't want to lose prestige. So, he ended up being jealous of a baby- if you can imagine that. That jealousy caused him to miss out on meeting the King. It led to the death of hundreds of Hebrew babies. It caused him to be written in our Sacred texts as a villain and forever remembered for his cruelty.

Though most of us might now be as extreme as Herod, we all allow fear to rule our lives in unhelpful ways. Our jealousy and desire to maintain power and control causes us to harm others or miss out on opportunities to love and serve others. We miss out on moments of joy when we are solely focused on maintaining our reputations.

As we start off this year together, let us also remember Herod, and as we make resolutions, let us find ways to let go of our inner Herods- the voices and desires we all have that lead to our destruction and detriment instead of our joy and new life.

As you start of your season of Epiphany, may you, like the Kings, feel light guiding you. May you be overcome with joy and praise so that you desire to share your blessings with the King and the world. May you have courage to follow where you are called to go, no matter the cost, just like the magi. May you remember Herod and not be guided by fear but, instead, be guided by hope.

Happy 3 Kings Day!

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

1 Songs of thank-ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to thee we raise;
 2 Man - i - fest at Jor - dan's stream, proph-et, priest, and king su - preme;
 3 Man - i - fest in mak - ing whole weak-ened bod - y, faint-ing soul;
 4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, pres - ent in thy ho - ly word;

man - i - fest - ed by the star to the sa - ges from a - far,
 and at Ca - na wed - ding guest in thy God-head man - i - fest;
 man - i - fest in val - iant fight, quell-ing all the dev - il's might;
 grace to im - i - tate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;

branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem in thy birth at Beth - le - hem;
 man - i - fest in pow'r di - vine, chang-ing wa - ter in - to wine;
 man - i - fest in gra - cious will, ev - er bring-ing good from ill;
 that we might be - come like thee at thy great e - piph - a - ny,

an - thems be to thee ad - dressed,
 an - thems be to thee ad - dressed, God in flesh made man - i - fest.
 an - thems be to thee ad - dressed,
 and may praise thee, ev - er blest,

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807–1885, alt.
 Music: SALZBURG, Jakob Hintze, 1622–1702; arr. Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685–1750

HYMN OF THE DAY *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise* (ELW 310)

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

1 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 flesh made manifest.

2 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 flesh made manifest.

3 Manifest in making whole
weakened body, 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 flesh made manifest.

4 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 flesh made manifest.

CREED (ELW p. 126)

**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 song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Glorious God, fill your church with joy. Let your faithful people live as beacons of your redemption. Give wisdom and courage to your church that it may speak with boldness and confidence, even when words of mercy are met with scorn. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Show us your faithfulness in the rising and setting of the sun. Place wonder into the hearts of those who search the skies and explore the heavens. Curb waste and pollution, that all might have clean air to breathe. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bring all nations and rulers to the splendor of your dawn. Raise up advocates who champion the cause of exploited and vulnerable people. Inspire leaders to be generous with abundance, that all people might live in stability and freedom. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Come quickly with your healing power to all who seek love, support, and restoration. Dispel fears and shadows. Restore broken relationships and mend broken hearts. Bring relief to those who are sick or struggling...

Members: Todd Hallstrom, Ron Almjeld, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson

Members in Nursing Homes: Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh

Members in Care Facilities: Joan Doeden, Jean Bender

Family Members & Friends: Lois Gruis, Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son)

Our service men and women and Love INC.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Be with our schools as they return to hybrid learning. Keep them safe. Guide the administering of the vaccine and use this instrument to bring us health and healing. Be with those who are serving on the front lines and give them energy for whatever is ahead. Be with those struggling

with COVID or any other illness and surround their families with support. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Send traveling mercies upon all who journey home by other roads. Guard refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers. Protect families fleeing conflict in their homelands or abuse in their homes. Tend to those who have no place to lay their heads. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

According to the boundless riches of Christ, you draw all your saints, from the least to the greatest, to your heavenly places. As you created all things, make all things new again in the splendor of your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

OFFERING AND CGC MOMENT

Instrumental of "We Three Kings..."

REFLECTION AND OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE OUT A WAY YOU CAN BE LIKE THE 3 KINGS

OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 129)

Let us pray.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 134)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

Go into God's world, bearing the light of hope and peace. Bring the Good News of the love of God through Jesus Christ to all the people. Go in peace. AMEN.

This Little Light of Mine

1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;

oh, oh,

this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;

oh,

this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,

oh,

let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

LIGHTING OF OUR ELECTRONIC EPIPHANY CANDLES

This Little Light of Mine

1 This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

2 Ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

3 Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 137)

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours - Monday—Thursday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm (noon) —1:00 - 4:30 pm & Friday 8:00 am—12:00 pm (noon).

Due to the rising numbers of Covid-19 infections, we will not have in-person worship or youth activities through January 19. Council will revisit this decision at their January meeting. **Services** will be on-line or drive-in. You can drive to the church on Wednesday or Sunday and listen to the service on FM 107.9 on your radio. We will have bulletins and communion supplies in the mailbox in the parking lot and by the front steps. There will be ushers to direct you.

Gift Cards will only be available in the office during office hours. Please call ahead to see if someone is available to get you cards. Thank You!

Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 10:00 am. We will have a hybrid meeting this year with some in-person and others can join on zoom. A letter will be going out in the next few days regarding the meeting.



Members: Janice Berger, Sandy Rogers, Todd Hallstrom, Ron Almjeld, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson

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Our service men and women

Our Missionaries: Chuck & Sybil Rounds in Costa Rica and Love INC.