

Sunday, January 7, 2024, 9:00am
The Epiphany of our Lord



WORSHIPPING THE KING

The 12 Days Christmas have come to an end. But the miraculous birth of the Son of God is only the beginning of the story.

Through Jesus came the fulfillment of all the promises to God's chosen people and the promise to Abraham was clear that by his seed "all the families of the earth" would be blessed.

This is the mystery Paul speaks of in Ephesians 3, how "the Gentiles are fellow heirs...of the promise in Christ Jesus".

Anything hidden remains a mystery until it's revealed. No one can come to faith in Jesus without the Gospel being revealed. Another word for "reveal" is "epiphany."

Matthew uses the word "behold," showing what may seem a surprise to some. "Behold, wise men from the east". "Behold, the star that they had seen".

Today we say, behold. Christmas is much bigger than many have thought. It encompasses nothing less than all God's earthly ministry culminating in His suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. It's nothing less than the gift of salvation to all who believe.

This epiphany has invaded your darkness through water and the Word of your 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 is to the end of days. By faith you have made a very good beginning.

Prelude

#397, As with Gladness Men of Old

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

P: Let us confess our sins to God our Father.

C: Most merciful God, I confess that I am by nature sinful and unclean. I have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what I have done and by what I have left undone. I have not loved You with my whole heart; I have not loved my neighbors as myself. I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Forgive me, renew me, and lead me, so that I may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations;

C: therefore nations will praise You forever and ever.

P: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;

C: You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

P: Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;

C: your robes are all fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and cassia.

P: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

C: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Kyrie LSB 152

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen.

This Is the Feast LSB 155

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.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

P: Together we pray,

C: 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. Amen.

Children's Time

Isaiah 60:1–6

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. 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. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 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. 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. 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.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Ephesians 3:1–12

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 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. 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. 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. 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, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse LSB 156

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia.

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

C: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

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, 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.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ““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.”” Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 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.” 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. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 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. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O, Christ.

#370 *What Child Is This*

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing; Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies He in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you; Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own Him. The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him. Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby; Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

The Sermon

P: Please rise as we profess our faith,

C: 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.

The Gathering of our Gifts and Tithes

Offertory LSB 159

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.

I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.

**I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.**

The Prayers of His Children

P: Lord, in Your mercy. **C:** Hear our prayer.

Preface LSB 160

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for what had been hidden from before the foundation of the world You have made known to the nations in Your Son. In Him, being found in the substance of our mortal nature, You have manifested the fullness of Your glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

Sanctus LSB 161

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might: Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Words of our Lord

P: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Jesus remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray,

C: 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.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Agnus Dei LSB 163

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.

The Distribution of Holy Communion

#367, *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

1 Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth; Ye who sang creation's story, Now proclaim Messiah's birth. Refrain

ref Come and worship, come and worship; Worship Christ, the newborn King.

- 2 Shepherds in the field abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night, God with us is now
residing, Yonder shines the Infant Light. Refrain
- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar; Seek the great Desire of
nations, Ye have seen His natal star. Refrain
- 4 Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear, Suddenly the Lord,
descending, In His temple shall appear. Refrain
- 5 All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son, Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One. Refrain

Text (sts. 1, ref, 2-4): James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt.; (st. 5): Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, Salisbury, alt.
Text: Public domain

#374, *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

- 1 Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger; There He lay, the Undefined,
To the world a stranger. Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His favor.
- 2 Angels sang about His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him; Heaven's star shone brightly
forth Glory all around Him. Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,
Heard the angels singing; All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were
ringing.
- 3 Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger; He is still the Undefined But no more a
stranger. Son of God of humble birth, Beautiful the story; Praise His name in all
the earth; Hail the King of glory!

Text: Joseph Simpson Cook, 1859-1933
Text: Public domain

#395, *O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright*

- 1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright! You shine with God's own truth and light,
Aglow 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!
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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!

5 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!

6 What 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!

Text: tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978, alt.; Philipp Nicolai, 1556–1608

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Thank the Lord LSB 164

**Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev'ryone what He has done.
 Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear His name.
 He recalls His promises and leads His people forth in joy
 with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia.**

P: Together, we pray,

**C: 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. Amen.**

God's Benediction

#394, 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 man 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 man made manifest.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807–85, alt.
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Postlude