

**Sunday, January 7, 2024, 11:15am**  
**The Epiphany of our Lord**

A night sky with a bright star and a sunset horizon. The sky is dark blue with many small stars. A bright star with a cross-shaped diffraction pattern is visible in the upper center. The lower part of the image shows a horizon with silhouettes of hills or mountains. The sky near the horizon is a mix of orange, red, and purple, indicating a sunset or sunrise.

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 is 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.*

### ***Opening Praise Song***

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

**C: Amen.**

P: I will go to the altar of God,

**C: to God my exceeding joy.**

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C: who made heaven and earth.**

P: I confess to Almighty God,

**C: before all the company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed through my fault, through my own fault, through my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray Almighty God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son, to have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.**

P: Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Together, we pray,

**C: God our Savior, as at creation Your first command was “Let there be light,” so by Your Word You create the light of faith in penitent hearts. As Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, keep us steadfast in Your Word, the revelation of Your truth; through 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.**

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

**C: Glory be to You, O Lord.**

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 be to You, O Christ.**

P: 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.**

### *Sermon Praise Song*

#### **The Sermon**

#### **The Gathering of our Gifts and Tithes**

#### **The Prayers of His Children**

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

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 meet, 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, in whom we behold by faith the light of the world that enlightens all people to the gift of salvation revealed in His sacrifice for the life of the whole world. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

**C: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.**

#### **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.**

### **The Distribution of Holy Communion**

**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**

### ***Sending Praise Song***