

The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills  
The Epiphany of Our Lord  
January 7, 2024



## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF VESTAVIA HILLS

201 So. Montgomery Highway Birmingham, Alabama 35216  
Church office: 205-823-1883 PreSchool/MDO: 205-791-5200  
Web Site: [www.vestavialutheran.org](http://www.vestavialutheran.org)  
WORSHIP: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sundays  
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:15 a.m.  
Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday



PASTOR: The Reverend Michael D. Ahlemeyer – [pastor@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:pastor@vestavialutheran.org) text: 205-201-8866  
PASTOR EMERITUS: The Reverend Clifford Hellmers – [vestluth@juno.com](mailto:vestluth@juno.com)  
VICAR: Matthew Vatthauer – [vicar@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:vicar@vestavialutheran.org)  
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CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR: Leigh Walter – [lwalter@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:lwalter@vestavialutheran.org)  
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BOOK KEEPER: Melanie Goodson - [bookkeeper@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:bookkeeper@vestavialutheran.org)  
ADOPTED MEDICAL MISSIONARIES - Arianna and David Shirk, Madeline & Annabelle - [shirkdavid@gmail.com](mailto:shirkdavid@gmail.com)



TO OUR GUESTS: We offer you a warm welcome in the name of Jesus. Please sign the Friendship Register. If you do not have a church home, we would be delighted to have you become a part of our church family. Please feel free to speak with the Pastor about membership in our congregation. If you do have a church home, we pray that God will bless you as you continue your growth in faith and love.



SUNDAY SCHOOL Adult Bible Classes meets in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall at 9:15 a.m. Children, Confirmation, and Youth classes also meet at 9:15 a.m. in the class rooms downstairs.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH and NURSERY Following the Children's Message, all children ages 3-7 are invited to Children's Church downstairs. They will return to the sanctuary after the sermon. A nursery attendant is provided for children ages birth to 3 years during our 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM services.



COMMUNION We invite all baptized Christians who acknowledge their sinfulness, trust in Christ as their Savior, and who recognize the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the bread and wine to join us at the Communion table. The practice of our congregation is to place the bread into the extended hand of the communicant. The wine is offered in individual cups; please take one from the tray as it is offered by the Elder. The common cup will be offered to those who do not take an individual cup. The cups in the center of the tray are filled with non-alcoholic wine, in consideration of persons who should not drink wine. Also, children who have not received Communion instruction are invited to come to the Communion rail, fold their hands and receive a blessing. Please notify an usher if you need a communion assistant to bring the Lord's Supper to you in the pew.

The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills

**THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD**

January 7, 2024

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

"As with Gladness Men of Old"

LSB #397 (v. 1-3,5)



1 As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing star be-hold;  
2 As with joy-ful steps they sped, Sav-ior, to Thy low-ly bed,  
3 As they of-fered gifts most rare At Thy cra-dle, rude and bare,  
5 In the heav'n-ly coun-try bright Need they no cre-at-ed light;



As with joy they hailed its light, Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;  
There to bend the knee be-fore Thee, whom heav'n and earth a-dore;  
So may we with ho-ly joy, Pure and free from sin's al-loy,  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;



So, most gra-cious Lord, may we Ev-er-more be led by Thee.  
So may we with will-ing feet Ev-er seek Thy mer-cy seat.  
All our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'n-ly King.  
There for-ev-er may we sing Al-le-lu-ias to our King.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 60:2-3

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

A star shall come out of Jacob,  
**a scepter will rise out of Israel.**

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.**

They shall bring gold and frankincense.  
**And shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.**

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.**

## CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

**Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE

"Arise and Shine in Splendor"

LSB #396 (v. 1, 4)



1 A - rise and shine in splen - dor; Let night to day sur -  
4 Lift up your eyes in won - der— See, na - tions gath - er



ren - der. Your light is draw - ing near. A - bove, the  
yon - der From sin to be set free. The world has



day is beam - ing, In match - less beau - ty  
heard Your sto - ry; Her sons come to Your



gleam - ing; The glo - ry of the Lord is here.  
glo - ry; Her daugh - ters haste Your light to see.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, by a star you led the Wise Men of old to worship the Christ child. So lead us that we too may worship Him in all our lives. Holy Spirit within us, guide our works and shape our deeds and actions into fit expressions of worship, praise, and love. This we ask in the name of Jesus, the Light of the world.

**Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

*(All Nations Will Come to the Light)*

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## EPISTLE READING

Ephesians 3:1-12

*(The Gentiles Are Fellow Heirs)*

<sup>1</sup>For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—  
<sup>2</sup>assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup>When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.  
<sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>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,<sup>9</sup> and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,<sup>10</sup> so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.<sup>11</sup> This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL PREPARATION VERSE

"O Morning Star"

LSB #395 (v. 1)



1 O Morn - ing Star, how fair and bright! You shine with God's



own truth and light, A - glow with grace and mer - cy!



Of Ja - cob's race, King Da - vid's son, Our Lord and mas -



ter, You have won Our hearts to serve You on - ly!



Low - ly, ho - ly! Great and glo - rious, All vic - to - rious,



Rich in bless - ing! Rule and might o'er all pos - sess - ing!

*(Visit of the Wise Men)*

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the second chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>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, <sup>2</sup>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." <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>"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."

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>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." <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.****APOSTLES' CREED**

*(inside back LSB cover)*

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**



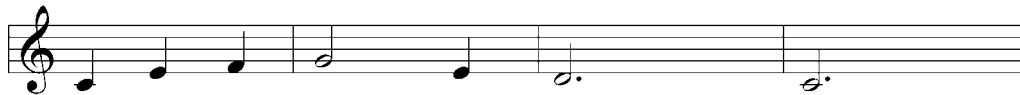
# HYMN OF THE DAY

## "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

LSB #411



1 I want to walk as a child of the light.  
2 I want to see the bright-ness of God.  
3 I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ.



I want to fol - low Je - sus.  
I want to look at Je - sus.  
I want to be with Je - sus.



God set the stars to give light to the world.  
Clear Sun of Righ - teous - ness, shine on my path,  
When we have run with pa - tience the race,



The star of my life is Je - sus.  
And show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
We shall know the joy of Je - sus.

### *Refrain*



In Him there is no dark - ness at all.



The night and the day are both a - like.



The Lamb is the light of the cit - y of God.



Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

## SERMON

*"God Set the Stars, to Give Light to the World"*

### **Ephesians 3:9**

Rev. Michael Ahlemeyer

## RESPONSE

"Song of Thankfulness and Praise"

LSB #394 (v.1,5)



1 Songs of thank - ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to Thee we raise,  
5 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,  
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:  
That we might be - come like Thee At Thy great e - piph - a - ny



An - thems be to Thee ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
And may praise Thee, ev - er blest, God in man made man - i - fest.

## **OFFERING**

*~Please sign the Record of Fellowship during the Offering~*

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

### **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.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

## **THE PEACE**

## **DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"

1. We three kings of Orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

*REFRAIN:* O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.

2. Born a King on Bethlehem plain,  
Gold I bring to crown Him again,  
King forever, ceasing never  
Over us all to reign  
*Refrain*

3. Frankincense to offer have I  
Incense owns a Deity nigh;  
Prayer and praising, all men raising,  
Worship Him, God on high.  
*Refrain*

4. Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom:  
Sorr'wing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.  
*Refrain*

5. Glorious now behold Him arise,  
King and God and Sacrifice;  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Earth to heav'n replies.  
*Refrain*

"What Child is This"

LSB #370



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is  
 2 Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and ass are  
 3 So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet While  
 feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The  
 own Him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is  
 si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall  
 lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the



Christ the king, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;  
 pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;  
 song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

*~Distribution Hymns continue on the following page~*

## DISTRIBUTION HYMNS (continued)

"The People That in Darkness Sat"

LSB #412 (v. 1-4)



1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious  
2 To hail Thee, Sun of Righ - teous - ness, The gath - 'ring  
3 To us a Child of hope is born, To us a  
4 His name shall be the Prince of Peace, The Ev - er -



light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In  
na - tions come; They joy as when the reap - ers bear Their  
Son is giv'n, And on His shoul - der ev - er rests All  
last - ing Lord, The Won - der - ful, the Coun - sel - or, The



shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.  
har - vest trea - sures home, Their har - vest trea - sures home.  
pow'r in earth and heav'n, All pow'r in earth and heav'n.  
God by all a - dored, The God by all a - dored.

## POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the life of Your Son, Christ Jesus, given to us in this Holy Meal. May Your Spirit bring to fruition in our lives the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation, that we would live for You, and love as Christ has loved us, for His sake and for the sake of all the world. We pray this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the LORD look upon you with His favor, and give you His peace.

**Amen.**

## **RECESSIONAL HYMN**

“The First Noel”

1. The first Noel the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay; keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

*REFRAIN:*      Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
                    Born is the King of Israel.

3. And by the light of that same star,  
Three Wise Men came from country far;  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.

*Refrain*

4. Then entered in those Wise Men three,  
Full reverently upon the knee,  
And offered there, in his presence  
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

*Refrain*

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

