

Sunday, January 4, 2026

2nd Sunday of Christmas – Celebrating the Feast of the Epiphany

Liturgy from Sundays and Season 2026



INTRODUCTION FOR 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.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

BLESSING OF THE CHURCH AT EPIPHANY

The congregation faces the entrance as the pastor leads them in the rite of blessing of the house of worship.

Peace be to this house of worship
and to all who enter here.

A reading from St. John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Let us pray: Gracious God, as a shining star once guided the magi to the birthplace of the infant Jesus, so enable those who dwell here to be your light in the world; through Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.

The Inscription (20 + C M B + 26) is made over the doorway while speaking the following words.

The Magi of old, known as

Caspar (C); Melchior (M) and Balthasar (B)

Followed the star of God’s Son who came to dwell among us

two thousand (20)

and twenty six (26) years ago

Christ, bless (+) this house of worship,

and remain (+) with us throughout the new year.



Let us pray together ... **O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star. We pray that you bless this house of worship and all who worship here with your gracious presence. May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace our benediction; through Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW # 302 “As with Gladness Men of Old”

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Apostolic Greeting

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.

Hymn of Praise: ELW # 289 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

Prayer of the Day

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.

Please be seated while the children come forward.

Children’s Time

The Word – Readings

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.

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 in 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.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (Read Responsively)

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.
⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**
⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**
⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
¹⁰ **May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.**
¹¹ May all kings bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service.
¹² **For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,
the oppressed, and those who have no helper.**
¹³ He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.
¹⁴ **From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.**



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.

¹ This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles, ² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵ In 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: ⁶ that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of 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. ⁸ Although 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 ⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so 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. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation - Sequence 1 – ELW # 282 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” Verse 1

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

The Gospel according to St. Matthew the 2nd Chapter, beginning at the 1st Verse. **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.

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They 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.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then 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.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On 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. ¹² And 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.**

Gospel Acclamation – Sequence 2 – ELW # 282 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” Verse 4

Please be seated.

Sermon **Pastor Steven Kuhl**

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Hymn of the Day: ELW # 295 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”



The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**



**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

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. 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. 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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Pastor: 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.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say, "Peace be with you" or similar words. The assembly is seated.

Offering – Collection of our offerings. *Music only during collection (ELW # 290 "Go Tell it on the Mountain")*

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray.

God of glory,
great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving
grace,
through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Sanctus: Holy, Holy, Holy – ELW # 189 “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Holy, Holy, Holy
Great Thanksgiving

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp). The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Music: Paul D. Weber, b. 1949
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Eucharistic Prayer (Advent through Epiphany) w/ The Words of Institution

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.



Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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.**

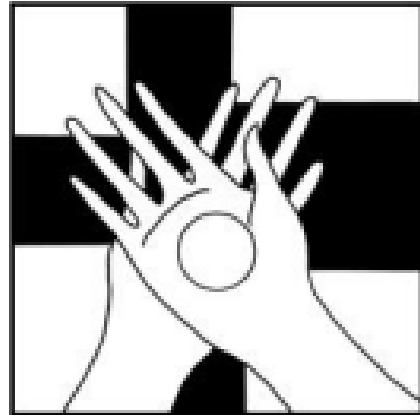
**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

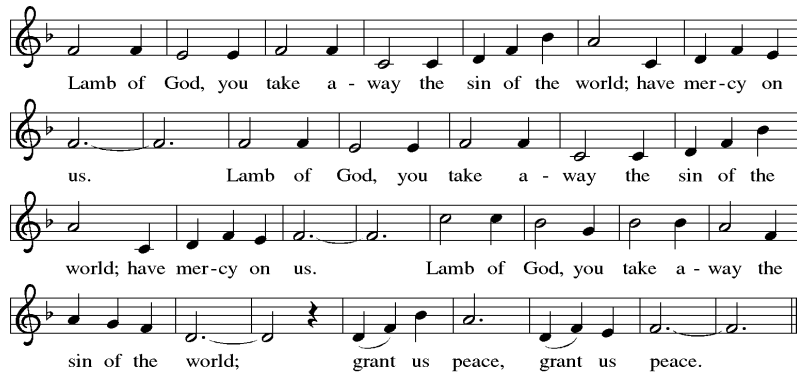
God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy! Come.

Please be seated and wait to come forward for Holy Communion after the singing of The Lamb of God song.



Lamb of God – ELW # 195 “Lamb of God”

Lamb of God



Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948
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Hymn During Communion: ELW # 303 “Brightest and Best of the Stars”

Blessing after Communion

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands. The presiding minister may say a table blessing; the assembly responds Amen.

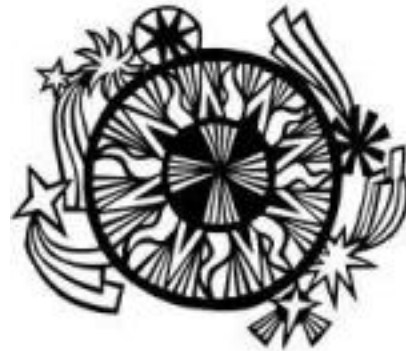
Prayer after Communion

Let us pray, together.

Incarnate God,
you are among us at this table.
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.
Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us. Amen.

Sending Blessing

The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.
Amen.



Sending Song: ELW # 671 “Shine, Jesus, Shine”

Dismissal

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to God’s people on earth!
Go in joy. Embody God’s redeeming grace.
Thanks be to God.



Postlude

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Today’s Lay Leaders

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Ushers: Judy Goodwin and Sue Clark

Communion Assistant: Jeanette Nowakowski

Altar Guild: Deanna Posig

Music & Worship Coordinator: Barb Regent

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