



Church of the Epiphany

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP

The Feast of the Epiphany • Cloudcroft, New Mexico • January 5, 2025



Collect for

The Feast of the Epiphany

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings for the Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-9
Psalm 72:1-11
Ephesians 3:1-13
Matthew 2:1-12

This is the time of the year when we can make New Year's Resolutions. Skip that. This is the time of the year to wish us at Epiphany Happy Birthday. We are 17 years old dating back to Epiphany of 2008 when we voted to become an Anglican Church in the Anglican Church in the United States under Uganda.

We have been blessed in the following years. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for your guidance and protection over these beginning years of our life. Our blessings from You are for the new building you provided and the funds to make it ours. We are also blessed to have a continuing loving congregation that works well together to keep this church in the meaning of our mission statement. We are a community of believers here to serve the spiritual needs of a world struggling to worship you, Almighty God.

We pray that in the coming year we may be your servant and spread the Good News in any way you see fit to move us.

Keep us healthy. Keep us happy. Keep us in your hands.

In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

On this second Sunday of Christmas some churches choose the Epiphany Day reading. Since this is our birthday we always choose these readings. The beginning of this festival goes back in the history of the early church. The exact beginnings of its importance are tied up in church history in the reaching out to Gentiles. The name of the festival suggests that, but from its start the name refers to the "revelation" of God in His Son Jesus.

Popular interest in the story can get wrapped up in the names of the three kings and the fact that there were three is only because of the three gifts. The entourage from the east may have taken a year or more to reach the home of Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus. It could well have consisted of many more people than just three kings. It might have been a caravan of twenty five SUV camels all lined up in a file. But we need to take notice that the visit by the kings was to pay homage to the new King of the Jews. The stop in Jerusalem was a mistake as it clued in Herod to this Messiah birth. He was in no mood to be in competition with a Jewish King as he was not a Jew. His popularity was conditioned by his reaching out to the community with his restoration of the Temple. What he really wanted to do was to eliminate all the male children under two years old in the region of Bethlehem and make sure he had no competition. He had already done in a wife and two sons to insure the reign.

This attitude of Herod's was the reason for the Holy Family to flee to Egypt. This is the fulfillment of prophecy for a new Israel.

This story from Matthew can be divided into parts. First the arrival of the Magi in Jerusalem and the consultation with the Scribes about the location of the birth of this star guided King. Second was Herod's request of the Magi to bring him news of the location so he could also worship the birth when they had found the child. Then we have the actual visit and adoration of the Child. Then the departure of the Magi by a different way home guided by a dream. All of these play a part of the worship to pay homage by Gentiles of the new King. This homage is highlighted in Psalm 72 today. The Psalm wishes for this new king's reign to be of righteousness and justice for the poor. It is about the King's heart and his rule over the people. Matthew's title for Jesus as King of the Jews was probably a death threat for Jesus as it connected Him to being the Christ.

All this wording of being from the East and the Magi following this light all refer to what may have been in reference to the Greek word for "rising."

It may be that a star suggests that we are really explaining the imagery of the new light coming into the world. This is the wake-up call from Isaiah to "Arise and Shine." "Your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen on you." This trip/visit of the magi can be seen as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah that it was necessary to make the pilgrimage to this new light. These Gentile Magi are acting to fulfill this prophecy.

The wisemen bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and worshiped the newborn. We have assigned them names of Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. We, by tradition, mark our doorways to guard our homes in the coming year. But there is more to this visit. The primary results of the coming was to worship him.

In the story by Matthew, we see three different responses to Jesus.

Herod displayed an open hatred and hostility toward Jesus.

The chief priests and scribes were indifferent toward this news of Jesus while retaining their religious respectability.

The wise men sought out Jesus and worshipped him.

In comparing the visit of the wise men to the earlier visit of the shepherds we read on Christmas Eve we see a different story.

Jesus comes to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles.

Jesus comes to the humble and ignorant first, then to the honored and learned.

Jesus came to the poor and then to the rich. We can learn from these wisemen.

They were not satisfied with looking at a star and admiring it.

They set out and followed it.

They were not discouraged in their search.

They followed it day after day.

They were not discouraged by the clergy and doubtful religious leaders

They rejoiced at the star.

When they arrived at their destination the star led them to, they entered in and there they worshiped.

They sensed an urgency to worship Him now and not wait.

They were not empty handed in their worship and adoration.

This story then gives us a wonderful pattern. Those who look for Jesus will see him; those who truly see him will worship him; those who worship him will consecrate their lives and substance to Him.

For us today we know much more than the wisemen did at the time. We know of Jesus and his redeeming presence among us. Without the Son of God to guide us we are without a star. But here at Epiphany we do have stars and we are very thankful.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, you are our Creator and you have led us to the star of your creation, our Lord Jesus Christ. May we love and adore you and follow the star with all our love.

We adore you Jesus for your coming to be with us. We are thankful for your teaching and healing and most especially for your sacrifice for our salvation.

We look with anticipation to your return to rule this world forever.

Amen.

Pastor Fred



Prayer List - 1/5/25

All Saints Anglican Church, and
St. Paul's Anglican Church, Midland, Rev. Tom
Finnie

Bishop Steven and Tricia

Those who need your healing care and strength:

Frank & Carolyn Wilson
Ellie
David Brinkley
Emma Connors
Esther & Joel Fyock
Darcy Ellis
Benda Williams and Kelle Senye
Mary Espinosa
Chip & Alyssa Taylor and baby
Julius
Rev. Elias Rosales Mendez
Melissa Jacquez

Those in the Armed Forces:

Dominick Rankin, US Army, Ft. Bliss, TX
Gabriella Murley, Ft. Bliss, TX
Mason Gregg, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
Creed Napier, US Air Force,
J.W. Grove, US Navy
Nicholas Tran, Joint Base Lewis-
McChord,
Shawn Zima, Hong Kong
Wyatt Green, US Navy

We pray for our Epiphany family:

Donya Conine; Trevor Conine; Wayne Jr.
and the family; Carol Greb, Kelli;
Harry Duval
Wally Skidmore
Charles and Susie Stigall
Rachel & Mary Spraitzer

Lessons for The Feast of the Epiphany

January 5, 2025

Anglican Lectionary
year C

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 60:1-9

60

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

2

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.

3

And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

4

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.

5

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.

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 bring good news, the praises of the
Lord.

7

All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will beautify my beautiful house.

8

Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?

9

For the coastlands shall hope for me,
the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your children from afar,
their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the Lord your God,
and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has made you beautiful.

Psalm 72:1-11

1 Give the King your judgments, O God, *
and your righteousness to the King's son.

2 Then shall he judge your people with
righteousness *
and defend the poor with justice.

3 The mountains also shall bring peace, *
and the little hills righteousness to the
people.

4 He shall vindicate the poor among the
people, *
defend the children of the poor, and
punish the wrongdoer.

5 They shall fear you as long as the sun and
moon endure, *
from one generation to another.

6 He shall come down like the rain upon the
mown grass, *
even as showers that water the earth.

7 In his time shall the righteous flourish, *
even an abundance of peace, so long as
the moon endures.

8 His dominion shall be also from one sea to
the other, *
and from the river unto the world's end.

Psalm 72:1-11 Continued

9 Those who dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before him; *
his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall give presents; *
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring gifts.

11 All kings shall fall down before him; *
all nations shall do him service.

**New Testament Reading
Ephesians 3:1-13**

3/1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— **2** assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, **3** how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. **4** When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** 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. **6** 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.

7 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. **8** 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, **9** and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in [b] God, who created all things, **10** so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. **13** So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

**The Holy Gospel
Matthew 2:1-12**

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

6 "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."

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