

The Epiphany of Our Lord

January 6, 2026

6:30 p.m.

AS WE GATHER

Christmas lights may be coming down, but the Light of the world still shines for all to see. We receive this Light during our Epiphany worship today. The promise that nations will come to the light of the Lord is fulfilled when the Wise Men come from the East. They follow the star and are led to the Light. Jesus is the light that shines the brightness of heaven into the darkness of their hearts. He does the same for you today as you receive His Word and gather at His Table. Dispelling the darkness of sin, Christ Jesus will fill you with the light of His presence and invite you, as He did the Wise Men, to bow before Him in honor and praise. Rejoice and be glad—your Light has come!

PRELUDE

Prelude and Fugue in E Minor

J. S. Bach

The congregation turns and faces the cross as the procession approaches the altar reminding us that Christ leads us into the presence of God.

❖ PREPARATION ❖

Please stand

ENTRANCE HYMN

397 As with Gladness Men of Old

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ❖ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

CONFESSiON AND ABSOLUTION

Based on Isaiah 60:1–6

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

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

Pastor: If You, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

People: **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

Pastor: Although God has graciously showered the light of His love on us, we have not always responded in lives of total devotion. But because He has graciously promised to forgive, let us go to Him in the name of “Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.”

People: **Gracious heavenly Father, we confess that we have let the distractions of this world turn our eyes from seeing the true Light. We have not loved You with our whole hearts. Forgive us and renew in us hearts to see, follow, and worship You alone.**

Pastor: In the mercy of almighty God, our heavenly Father sent His Son to take to His cross all our sins, and His Holy Spirit has graciously shined the light of faith in Christ into our hearts. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ❖ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

HYMN OF PRAISE

533 Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure

- 1 Jesus has come and brings pleasure eternal,
Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End;
Godhead, humanity, union supernal,
O great Redeemer, You come as our friend!
Heaven and earth, now proclaim this great wonder:
Jesus has come and brings pleasure eternal!

- 4 Jesus has come as the King of all glory!
Heaven and earth, O declare His great pow'r,
Capturing hearts with the heavenly story;
Welcome Him now in this fast-fleeting hour!
Ponder His love! Take the crown He has for you!
Jesus has come! He, the King of all glory!

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: 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.

✖ WORD ✎

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

(The Lord promises to visit His people as light, attracting other nations to His glory.)

¹ "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. ⁵ Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. ⁶ Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 72:1-11

Pastor: Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.

People: **He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.**

Pastor: The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness.

People: **He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor.**

Pastor: He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations.

People: **He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth.**

Pastor: In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.

People: **He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.**

Pastor: The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust.

People: **The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts.**

All: **All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.**

EPISTLE

Ephesians 3:1-12

(Paul rejoices in his calling to preach to the Gentiles.)

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

“We Three Kings”

arranged by John Leavitt

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

Refrain:

*Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to Thy perfect light.*

*Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gifts we bring to crown Him again;
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign. (refrain)*

*Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Earth to heav'n replies. (refrain)*

Please stand

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

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

(The Magi are examples for our lives of faith.)

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ ""But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN

400 Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Please stand

NICENE CREED

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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Creator of Light, we praise You during these darkest weeks of the year that You do not leave us in spiritual darkness. When you spoke the word at creation, there was light. When Your people wandered in the valleys of deep spiritual darkness, You sent Your Son Jesus as the Light of the world.

People: **Let the Light of Your grace shine upon Your people, O Lord.**

Pastor: Beautiful Savior, Lord of the Nations, You were not afraid to enter the darkness of our world, sharing the plight of Your people and the temptations that plague us all. You willingly endured the darkness of the cross so that we might be forgiven of our sins and live in the light of Your resurrection.

People: **Let the Light of Your grace shine upon Your people, O Lord.**

Pastor: Holy Spirit, You enlighten us with Your gifts. We ask Your blessing upon our congregation. We ask You to guide our congregation to many with whom we can share the light of the Gospel. And we ask that You empower us to share Your Word and love at home, at work, and in our neighborhoods.

People: **Let the Light of Your grace shine upon Your people, O Lord.**

Pastor: Lord God Almighty, give Your healing grace to the sick, the suffering, the dying, and those who mourn.

People: **Let the light of Your grace shine upon Your people, O Lord.**

Pastor: Holy Trinity, source of all light, You give us more than we desire or deserve.

People: **Provide us with what we need, for You live and rule as the source of our life – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

OFFERING

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

setting by Charles W. Ore

✖ SACRAMENT ✎

In the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's body and blood in and with the bread and wine. The two great blessings of the Lord's Supper are the forgiveness of sins and strength to live an improved Christian life. In response to the Lord's command we are to examine ourselves privately prior to partaking of the Sacrament. There are three basic questions on which we should examine ourselves, all of which we should be able to answer in the affirmative if we are to partake of the Sacrament worthily: 1) Am I truly sorry for my sins? 2) Do I believe Jesus Christ is my Savior? 3) Do I promise with God's help to live a Christian life? If you agree with the above statement, we invite you to the Sacrament.

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Pastor: Lord God, we praise and thank You for the mercy You share with us in the gift of Jesus Christ. Through His Word and Baptism He brought us salvation, and through this Holy Meal He gives us the gift of Himself – His true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. In His Sacraments there is forgiveness of sins; so also there is life and salvation. We come joyfully to the light of Jesus Christ who has come to us today. Lord, remember us in Your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

PEACE OF THE LORD

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

People: **And also with you.**

If you wish to take communion in the pew, please raise your hand when the communion assistant comes down the aisle.

When the wine is distributed, individual glasses will be offered first, then the common cup. Communicants may take whichever is preferred. If taking the individual glass, please keep the glass visible so that the communion assistant with the common cup will know who has already communed.

Non-alcoholic wine is available in the center of the communion tray for those who have a sensitivity to the alcohol in wine.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

403 O Savior of Our Fallen Race

395 O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

SILENT PRAYER

You may pray the following prayer as we give thanks to God for His good gifts:

Almighty and everlasting God, I thank and praise You for feeding me the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send Your Holy Spirit that, having with my mouth received the holy Sacrament, I may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen

Please stand

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. Trusting in Your gracious forgiveness, we pray that we see You accompanying us each day, follow where You lead, and give You praise and worship in all that we do and say; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

Please turn towards the cross as it is carried out of the church, and remain facing it until the hymn is completed. This symbolizes our following Christ into the world as we leave.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

411 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

POSTLUDE

Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her

J. S. Bach

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Serving at Chapel

Preacher: Charles Wallace

Liturgist: Theodore Laesch

Singers: Matt Mc Euen, Mark Petersen, Craig Schlichtmann

Organist & Accompanist: David Eatherton