

Epiphany Sunday, Year B Celebrated January 3, 2021

Introduction

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, 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.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you revealed the incarnation of your Son by the brilliant shining of a star. Shine the light of your justice always in our hearts and over all lands, and accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings and Psalm

[Isaiah 60:1-6](#)

Nations come to the light

[Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14](#)

All kings shall bow down before him. (*Ps. 72:11*)

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

Revelation of Christ to the nations of the earth

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.

¹Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light,

and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift 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 on their nurses' arms.
⁵Then 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.
⁶A 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.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

All kings shall bow down before him. (Ps. 72:11)

¹Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
²that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;
³that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.
⁵May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
⁶Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.
⁷In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more....

¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
¹¹May all kings bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service.
¹²For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,
the oppressed, and those who have no helper.
¹³He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

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.

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

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then 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." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, "Hear us, O God," you respond, "**Your mercy is great.**"

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence is held as we gather our prayers.

Glorious God, fill your church with joy. Let your faithful people live as beacons of your redemption. Give wisdom and courage to your church that it may speak with boldness and confidence, even when words of mercy are met with scorn.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Show us your faithfulness in the rising and setting of the sun. Place wonder into the hearts of those who search the skies and explore the heavens. Curb waste and pollution, that all might have clean air to breathe.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bring all nations and rulers to the splendor of your dawn. Raise up advocates who champion the cause of exploited and vulnerable people. Inspire leaders to be generous with abundance, that all people might live in stability and freedom.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Come quickly with your healing power to all who seek love, support, and restoration. Dispel fears and shadows. Restore broken relationships and mend broken hearts. Bring relief to those who are sick or struggling.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send traveling mercies upon all who journey home by other roads. Open our hearts to strangers in our midst, whether they are our own grown children, neighbors whom we no longer recognize, or people who have come from faraway lands. Protect travelers, refugees and families fleeing conflict and abuse, in their homelands and in their own homes.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer back to you, whether offerings of ourselves, our time, or a portion of our wealth, that through these gifts, the world might recognize Jesus, God-with-us, and receive your blessing.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

According to the boundless riches of Christ, you draw all your saints, from the least to the greatest, to your heavenly places. As you created all things, make all things new again in the splendor of your glory.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Blessing

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and [little cross here] give you peace.

Amen.

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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Prayers adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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