

# The Epiphany of our Lord

## January 6, 2024

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath and as many other candles as practical.

Epiphany is a time for us to celebrate that Jesus is made known to us as Savior and Lord. He was revealed to the Wise Men as “King of the Jews.” In His baptism, He was revealed to be God’s “Beloved Son.” In His miracle at Cana, His disciples witnessed for the first time His command over nature. We know Him as King of the Universe, Lord of the Church, and King of Heaven. We know Him not only as the babe born in Bethlehem but as the only-begotten Son of God. We know Him as the One who was given for our salvation so that believing in Him, we may have eternal life.

### As with Gladness Men of Old

Lutheran Service Book 397, Lutheran Worship 75, The Lutheran Hymnal 127



- 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,
- 4 Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-'ry day Keep us in the nar-row way;
- 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,  
And when earth-ly things are past, Bring our ran-somed souls at last  
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.  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide.  
There for-ev-er may we sing Al-le-lu-ias to our King.

**L** In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** **who made heaven and earth.** (*Psalm 124:8*)

**L** Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

**C** **Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me.** (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

**L** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

**C** **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.** (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

**L** Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

**C** **God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.** (*Luke 18:13*)

**L** Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, 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.

**C** Amen.

### Introit Psalm 45:6-7; antiphon Psalm 45:17

**L** I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;  
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

**C** **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;  
you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.**

**L** Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;  
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**L** I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;  
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

### Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

### Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

**L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

**C** **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**

**L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

**C** **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

**C** **For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: 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.
- C** Amen.

## Isaiah 60:1–6

- <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.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

## Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

- L** Praise the LORD, all nations!
- C** Extol him, all peoples!
- L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,
- C** and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
- L** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
- C** bring an offering, and come into his courts!

## Psalm 72:1–15

- L** <sup>1</sup> Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!
- C** <sup>2</sup> May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!
- L** <sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!

- C** <sup>4</sup>**May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!**
- L** <sup>5</sup>May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!
- C** <sup>6</sup>**May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!**
- L** <sup>7</sup>In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!
- C** <sup>8</sup>**May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!**
- L** <sup>9</sup>May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust!
- C** <sup>10</sup>**May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!**
- L** <sup>11</sup>May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!
- C** <sup>12</sup>**For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.**
- L** <sup>13</sup>He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.
- C** <sup>14</sup>**From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.**
- L** <sup>15</sup>Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him!
- May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day!

### Ephesians 3:1–12

<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.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

### Verse of the Day: Luke 2:30, 32

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia, We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. Alleluia.

### Matthew 2:1–12

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.
- C** 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.

**L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father

Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

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

### O God of God, O Light of Light

Lutheran Service Book 810, Lutheran Worship 83, The Lutheran Hymnal 132



1 O God of God, O Light of Light, O Prince of Peace and  
2 For deep in proph - ets' sa - cred page, And grand in po - ets'  
3 That life of truth, those deeds of love, That death so steeped in  
4 Then raise to Christ a might - y song, And shout His name, His



King of kings: To You in heav - en's glo - ry bright The song of  
wing - ed word, Slow - ly in type, from age to age The na - tions  
hate and scorn— These all are past, and now a - bove He reigns, our  
mer - cies tell! Sing, heav' - n - ly host, your praise pro - long, And all on



praise for - ev - er rings. To Him who sits up - on the throne,  
saw their com - ing Lord; Till through the deep Ju - de - an night  
King once crowned with thorn. Lift up your heads, O might - y gates!  
earth, your an - them swell! All hail, O Lamb for sin - ners slain!



The Lamb once slain but raised a - gain, Be all the glo - ry  
Rang out the song, "Good - will to men!" Sung once by first - born  
So sang that host be - yond our ken. Lift up your heads, your  
For - ev - er let the song as - cend! Wor - thy the Lamb, en -



He has won, All thanks and praise! A - men, a - men.  
sons of light, It ech - oes now, "Good - will!" A - men.  
King a - waits. We lift them up. A - men, a - men.  
throned to reign, All glo - ry, pow'r! A - men, a - men.

Public domain

### Devotional thoughts:

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, one of America's greatest superstars of all time will celebrate his birthday! On that day, Don Gartlits will turn 92 years old!

Don Gartlits is not a movie star or a rock star. He is not a baseball, football, basketball, or hockey star. But if you grew up in the '60s or '70s listening to WLS radio, you will never forget him because of this commercial, "Sunday, Sunday, Sunday at beautiful US 30 drag strip with 'Big Daddy' Don Gartlits. Where the great ones run, run, run."

"Big Daddy" Don Gartlits is a pioneer in the field of drag racing. He is credited with perfecting the rear-engine Top Fuel dragster.

Don Gartlits was the first drag racer to officially surpass the 170, 180, 200, 240, 250, and 270 mile-per-hour in the quarter mile! He was also the first to top 200 mph in the 1/8 mi!

Why, you ask, are you talking about "Big Daddy" Don Gartlits on this celebration of The Epiphany of our Lord? Let me explain. It all has to do with Matthew 2:10 from our Gospel lesson for Epiphany, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

This little praise "They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" is very interesting. It seems that Matthew really wants to draw your attention to the joy experienced by the wise men when they saw the star. A literal word-for-word translation of that phrase from the Greek language might go something like this, "The rejoiced with joy mega exceedingly." The word that really caught my attention was "exceedingly." This word in Greek is "sphodra" (σφόδρα). In studying this little word, I came to the conclusion that "exceedingly" really doesn't do it justice.

Lexicons tell us that it means, “excessive, vehement, or violent.” It has the force of “all out”, “to the max”, or “with total effort!” In Star Trek terms, Scotty might explain *sphodra* this way, “I’m giving her all she’s got, Captain.”

Another way to explain this verse is to translate it this way, “When they saw the star, they rejoiced with great ‘*pedal to the metal*’ joy!” This is how I came up with “Big Daddy” Don Gartlits. In my mind’s eye, I can see a Top Fuel dragster explode from the starting line of Smokin’ US 30 Drag Strip. I realized that is the kind of intense joy experienced by the wise men on their way to find the one “who has been born king of the Jews.”

Some years ago, I was given the gift of a devotion-a-day calendar written by one of America’s top evangelical pastors. I started faithfully to read each daily devotion. Unfortunately, when I got to the reading for January 6, my heart sank. On this most wonderful day of the Epiphany of our Lord, there was no mention of the wise men or their rejoicing with “pedal to the metal” great joy. I couldn’t go on.

The wise men had this exceedingly great joy not because of the star itself but because they knew that the star would lead them to the newborn King.

When they went into the house and found baby Jesus, they could not contain themselves! They immediately fell down and worshiped Him. They gave Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. As much as I would like to, I’m not going to explore the importance of Epiphany gifts but the source of their joy and ours.

The Greek word for wise men is magi (magoi, μάγοι). They came from beyond the eastern limits of the Roman Empire.

The magi were the scholars of their day. They may have been familiar with Hebrew Scriptures. However, God revealed to them a mystery that no one could discover through human reason or research. He revealed to them the Savior of the world. God led them to the Savior of the world through the miracle of a star. This was their great Epiphany. They rejoiced with exceedingly great joy!

You and I, too have had an Epiphany. God has revealed to us something that human wisdom could never discover.

The Apostle Paul put it this way in 2 Timothy 1:9-10:

“<sup>9</sup> [God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,<sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing [EPIPHANY] of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

This is our great Epiphany. God saved us, not because of our works but because of His grace through the Epiphany of our Savior Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel! Can you think of any greater reason for us to “rejoice with exceedingly great joy”? Is not Epiphany a time for us to rejoice with “great ‘*pedal to the metal*’ joy!”?

The great Epiphany revealed to us in the Bible is that God loves us! The Apostle John writes in 1 John 4:7-12,

“<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made *manifest* among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

### **O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright**

Lutheran Service Book 395, Lutheran Worship 343, The Lutheran Hymnal 73

- 1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright,  
Thou beamest forth in truth and light!  
O Sov’reign meek and lowly,  
Thou Root of Jesse, David’s Son,  
My Lord and Master, Thou hast won  
My heart to serve Thee solely!  
Thou art holy,  
Fair and glorious, all-victorious,  
Rich in blessing,  
Rule and might o’er all possessing.
- 2 Thou heav’nly Brightness, Light divine,  
O deep within my heart now shine,  
And make Thee there an altar.  
Fill me with joy and strength to be  
Thy member, ever joined to Thee  
In love that cannot falter;  
Toward Thee longing  
Doth possess me; turn and bless me;  
Here in sadness  
Eye and heart long for Thy gladness.

Public domain

### **Prayer of the Church on Epiphany**

- ☐ Most merciful God, we rejoice in the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. When you led the Magi by a star to worship the baby Jesus, you revealed your desire for everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Grant that by the preaching of Your Gospel we may join the Wise Men in receiving the wisdom that leads to salvation. By the working of Your Holy Spirit keep us attentive to all the teachings of Your Word. Enlighten our minds, control our wills, and purify our desires. Let Your Word be a light for our path that neither the pleasures nor the honors nor the pains of this life may turn away our thoughts from the fullness of life that is found only in You. Enable us in sincerity of heart to follow You,



the only true God with the resolve and purpose of the Magi who sought the newborn king. By Your holy Word enlighten all who are in error, doubt, or temptation with the sure and certain knowledge of Your truth that all who live in sin may be led to repentance. Show mercy and grace to all those suffering any distress, to those who are sick or hospitalized, and to those facing death. Let them know the sure comfort of Your holy Word. We commit ourselves and all for whom we pray to Your fatherly care and benediction. Be gracious to us and defend us by Your power. Direct us by Your Spirit that we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior until we shall stand before You in the joy of everlasting glory; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

### **Collect to Enter the New Year**

**L** Lord God our Father, You kept Abraham and Sarah in safety throughout the days of their pilgrimage, You led the children of Israel through the midst of the sea, and by a star You led the Wise Men to the infant Jesus. Protect and guide us now in this time as we enter this New Year. Make our ways safe and our homecomings joyful, and bring us at last to our heavenly home, where You dwell in glory with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**L** O Lord, grant us grace to rejoice in Christ's incarnation; and thankfulness that, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem us and give us the adoption as Your sons and heirs; and grant us a glad new year,.

**C Amen.**

**C** 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.

**L** Let us bless the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God.**

**L** The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**C Amen.**

## The People That in Darkness Sat

Lutheran Service Book 412, Lutheran Worship 77, The Lutheran Hymnal 106



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.

5 His righteous government and pow'r  
Shall over all extend;  
On judgment and on justice based,  
His reign shall have no end,  
His reign shall have no end.

6 Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,  
And make us Thine alone,  
Who with the Father ever art  
And Holy Spirit, one,  
And Holy Spirit, one.

Public domain

### Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some liturgical portions are adapted from Lutheran Service Book © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Lutheran Service Book License: 10002731 Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Michigan

Hymns are in the public domain. The remainder of this work including adaptations and the Devotional thoughts © 2021-2024 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.