



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

January 6, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

The Festival of Epiphany

Reading: [Luke 2:1-7](#)

Reading: [Isaiah 60:1-6, 9](#)

Reading: [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

Reading: [Ephesians 3:2-12](#)

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

This evening's service focuses on God's plan of revealing Jesus Christ as the Light of the world. The word **epiphany** means "manifestation" or "visible display" and refers to the "revealing" of Jesus as Savior, not only of the Jews but of all the peoples of the world. Since the middle of the fourth century the Church has celebrated the coming of the Magi (the Wise Men) as the culmination of the Christmas season.

The coming of the Magi to pay homage to Jesus is no mere interesting tale with a moral; rather the story speaks to the very essence of the gospel. We are "heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Jesus Christ" ([Ephesians 3:6](#)). No wonder that Epiphany in the early Church was a major celebration, second only to Easter. Through this church year festival, The Epiphany of Our Lord, the manifestation of God's salvation is made clear to all people.

This service involves a procession. A procession is an act of worship. Tonight the procession represents the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem. With the Magi we adore the newborn King and offer gifts to our King and Savior. The assisting minister and the presiding minister walk down the aisle with the Paschal Candle symbolizing Christ, the Light of the world, who brings light to us.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

[Luke 2:1-7](#)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her

firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

NARRATIVE OF LIGHT

[Isaiah 60:1-6, 9](#)

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

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. 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. 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. Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 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."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 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. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"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."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 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."

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. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 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. And having

been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

THE MYSTERY REVEALED

[Ephesians 3:2-12](#)

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 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. 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.

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 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, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 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, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7.](#)) Amen.