



Numbers 24:17

*"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."*



The Epiphany of Our Lord January 2 / 3, 2021 St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church

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Today's service is televised locally

Channel 14 - Comcast: Monday at 6:00 p.m. & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. & Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

Channel 3 - Nuvera: Mondays at 6:00 p.m. & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. & Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

The Epiphany of Our Lord

January 2/3, 2021

Prayer before worship: Almighty God, you have made known to us the mystery of the gospel which reveals Jesus Christ as the Savior of all people from every race and nation under heaven. Give us joy in knowing that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, and make us lights in this sin-darkened world who shine with the borrowed glory that you cause to be reflected in our lives as we tell others the precious good news that Jesus Christ lived, died, rose, ascended, and will return in glory. Cause your glorious Word to shine like the Christmas star which led the Wisemen to you, dear Lord. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory

CW 80

1. Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Once you sang creation's story; Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain:

Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

2. Shepherds, in the fields abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing— Yonder shines the infant light. *Refrain*
3. Magi, leave your contemplations; Brighter visions beam afar.
Seek the great desire of nations; You have seen the Savior's star. *Refrain*
4. Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending, In his temple shall appear. *Refrain*

Please stand

P: The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

♪: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

♪: **Christ, have mercy.**

P: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

♪: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

♪: **Amen.**

P: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

♪: **O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.**

Almighty God, merciful Father, you crown our life with your love.

You take away our sin; you comfort our spirit; you make us pure and holy in your sight.

You did not spare your only Son, but gave him up for us all.

O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.

O Son of God, eternal Word of the Father, you came to live with us;

you made your Father known; you washed us from our sins in your own blood.

You are the King of glory; you are the Lord!

O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.

P: Let us pray.

Lord God, by the leading of a star you once made known to the nations your one and only Son.

Guide us, also, who know him now by faith, to come at last to the perfect joy of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

♪: **Amen.**

Please be seated

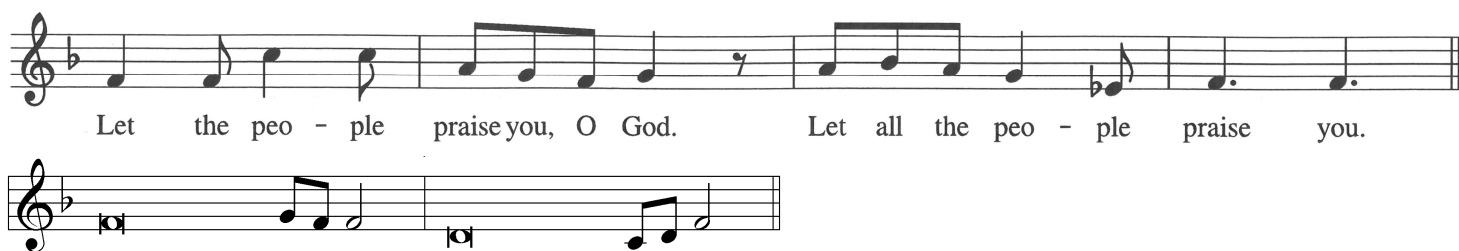
FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 60:1-6

"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."



Endow the King with your justice, O God,*
the royal Son with your righteousness.

He will defend the afflicted among the people*
and save the children of the needy.

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

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

Refrain

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

All nations will be blessed through him,*
and they will call him blessed.

Praise be to the LORD God, who alone does marvelous deeds.*
May the whole earth be filled with his glory.

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.

Refrain

SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 3:1-12

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- 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.

VERSE of the DAY

♪: **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Please stand

GOSPEL LESSON

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.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

♪: **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

Please be seated

HYMN of the DAY***How Lovely Shines the Morning Star*****CW 79**

1. How lovely shines the Morning Star! The nations see and hail afar
The light in Judah shining.
O David's Son of Jacob's race, My Bridegroom and my King of grace,
For you my heart is pining.
Lowly, Holy, Great and glorious, O victorious Prince of graces,
Filling all the heav'nly places.
2. O highest joy by mortals won, True Son of God and Mary's Son,
The highborn King of ages!
In your blest body let me be, E'en as the branch is in the tree,
Your life my life supplying.
Sighing, Crying For the savor Of your favor
Resting never Till I rest in you forever.
3. O mighty Father, in your Son You loved me ere you had begun
This ancient world's foundation.
Your Son has made a friend of me, And when in spirit him I see,
I joy in tribulation.
What bliss Is this! He is living, To me giving
Life forever; Nothing me from him can sever.
4. Oh, joy to know that you, my Friend, Are Lord, beginning without end,
The first and last, eternal!
And you at length—O glorious grace—Will take me to that holy place,
The home of joys supernal.
Amen, Amen! Come and meet me, Quickly greet me! With deep yearning,
Lord, I look for your returning.
5. Lift up the voice and strike the string, Let all glad sounds of music ring
In God's high praises blended.
Christ will be with me all the way, Today, tomorrow, ev'ry day
Till trav'ling days are ended.
Sing out, Ring out Triumph glorious, O victorious Chosen nation;
Praise the God of your salvation.

SERMON**Ephesians 3:1-12****GOD REVEALS HIS MYSTERY**

- 1. THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS BROUGHT TO LIGHT**
- 2. THE LIGHT OF THE WORD BROUGHT TO ALL THE WORLD**

Please stand

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became fully human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYER of the CHURCH

P: Gracious God and Father, we praise you for the countless blessings, which we receive from your hand: the beauties of creation and the bounties of the earth, the joy of life and the pleasure of friendship, the good of work and the gift of rest, the privilege to share happiness and sorrow with one another. Above all we praise and thank you for your saving Word and for your Son's body and blood, which you give us to eat and to drink in the sacrament. Through these means of grace, you send the Holy Spirit into our hearts and unite us to Jesus and to the whole Christian Church on earth.

C: Strengthen us through this heavenly food; increase our trust in Christ and our love for one another.

P: Great God and Lord, without your continuing help we easily waver in our faith, lose courage, and grow careless in our watchfulness. The times and days are perilous. Give us strength to face the evils of each day with fresh confidence. Open our lips to speak of your grace, and move us to use the gifts that you give us to share your Word of salvation with all people. Protect and prosper the family, the school, the government, and all good institutions that you have established for the benefit of society. Remember in mercy those who are sick and suffering, and bring your healing to troubled homes and lives.

C: Move us to pray for those in need and to help them with deeds of kindness.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

P: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

P: Now, eternal God and Father, keep us in the saving faith and so enable us to overcome all things through our Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

P: The Lord be with you.

♪: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

♪: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

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

♪: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

P: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

In the past he spoke to us through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, who is the radiance of his glory.

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever:

♪: **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.**

You are my God, and I will exalt you.

I will give you thanks, for you have become my salvation.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

♪: **Amen.**

♪: **O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. Amen.

Please be seated

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

Brightest and Best

CW 92

1. Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.
2. Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and monarch and Savior of all.
3. Shall we not yield him in costly devotion
Rarest of fragrances, tribute divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?
4. Vainly we bring him the finest of off'rings,
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure.
Richer by far is the praise that the heart brings;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.
5. Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Please stand

- ♪: **Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.
He renews his promises and leads his people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving.
Alleluia! Alleluia!**
- P: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- ♪: **Amen.**
- P: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
- The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.
- ♪: **Amen. Amen. Amen.**

† † †

**PREACHER
PRESIDING MINISTER
ORGANIST**

Pastor Jeffrey Bovee
Pastor Rob Guenther
Jeneane Thiesfeldt

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attendance for the past weekend was 233.

2021 Contribution Envelopes ~ The 2021 offering envelopes can be found either in your bulletin box or in alphabetical order on the tables in the new narthex. To ensure you receive proper credit, please do not use the 2021 envelopes until January 1st. Also, do not use 2020 envelopes after December 31st - please dispose of them. Thank you for your cooperation.

In-Person Bible Classes ~ will resume Thursday, January 7th. Pastor Bovee will have the topic of Angels at 10:30 am. Pastor Guenther will lead a study of the book of Revelation at 7 pm. Sunday morning Bible class will resume on Sunday, January 10th. The First 1,000 Years of Christianity will be taught by Prof. Keith Wessel. The in-person classes will be held in the church basement or join online at bit.ly/StJohnsBibleClass.

AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Paul's School Preschool Open Houses ~ COVID careful Open Houses for the 2021-2022 school year will be held Friday, January 15 and Monday, January 18, from 3 - 6 pm. To sign up for an Open House time slot or for more information, please contact St. Paul's Preschool office at preschool@splnewulm.org. The time slots will be 20 minutes.

MVL News ~ Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School seeks a WELS or ELS male to serve as *Director of Mission Advancement*. Interested individuals should contact MVL Principal, Dr. Tim Plath, for more information at 507-354-6851 or tplath@mvlhs.org. MVL's sacred Christmas concert will be livestreamed on Wednesday, January 6 at 5 and 7 pm. Both concerts will include the same musical groups and the same selections. Please join us online at mvl.org!

About the Cover ~ This is the celebration of Epiphany. The word means to shine forth or make known. Today we remember how Jesus was made known as the Savior of the world commemorated by the coming of the Magi or Wisemen who are thought to have been Gentiles, and yet sought out the Savior-king who was to be born in accordance with the words of the prophets. Today Jesus still reveals himself to us in his Word and beckons to us follow him and put our faith in his grace.