

Lessons for the Festival of the Epiphany**January 6, 2013**

Isaiah 60:1–6 ~ *The light of God's glory shining through His people will gather nations from all the earth.*

Psalm 72 (*Antiphon: Psalm 72:10–11*)

Ephesians 3:1–12 ~ *The mystery of God's grace in Christ was revealed to Paul to be preached to Gentiles.*

Matthew 2:1–12 ~ *Magi came from the East to worship Christ, but did not report His birthplace to Herod.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Behold a Star!

Through the prophet Isaiah, God had promised a light to draw nations and kings to His chosen King of Israel. The bright star that appeared to the Magi in the East guided them to Jerusalem and from there to Bethlehem so that they found the place where the child was. St. Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers that it was no longer a mystery how God had planned to bring Jews and Gentiles together through Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. Now it is our job to follow the Star of Bethlehem as we share the news of this Savior King of the Jews.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Loving God, You have lighted the way to Jesus' birthplace and have given Him to be the Light of the World through His death and resurrection. Bless me with the eyes of faith to see that He is the Messiah, and give me willing courage to guide others to His forgiving grace and eternal promise of Life. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: The material goods God has showered upon us may not be as distinctive as gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but they can still be used to show that Jesus is the King of all peoples and the Lord of our lives.

OFFERING PRAYER:

Dear Lord, we bring you neither gold nor myrrh
but gifts we have and ask that by Your might,
our love be shown through them to those who were
in darkness lost, that they may see Your Light. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: The two kings juxtaposed in today's lessons remind us of the two kingdoms in which we live. Often we are more like Herod in his jealous fear, trying to defend our selfish interests from the incursion of this new kingdom, rather than like Paul, eager to spread the message of God's love in Christ to extend the kingdom of His grace. God has called us today, just as He called His people of old, to live in ways that draw people out of the darkness of this world into the light of His love revealed in Christ our Lord.

BONUS: Jesus Shined His Light on Me

Jesus shined his light on me,
Gave me sight that I may see.
Jesus always walks beside me
On the path of life to guide me.
Now my faith shines like a light
In the darkness of the night.

Jesus loves us every day:
Died to take our sins away.
When God washed us in the waters
We became his sons and daughters.
Now we live like children should,
Always trying to be good.

– Gilbert A. Franke, 3/28/1999
Tune: Weil ich Jesu Schaefflein bin (77 88 77)
(LSB # 740: "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb")