

Epiphany 2021



Collects, are from *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979.

Scripture readings are from *The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Artwork

Cover. c.e. Visminas Designs, Morehouse Publishing, 2001.

Epiphany, Adoration of the Magi, Albrecht Dürer, 1501-02.

Epiphany 1, 3, 4, 7, c.e. Visminas Designs, Morehouse Publishing, 2001.

Epiphany 2, Albrecht Dürer, 1500.

Epiphany 5, Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law, James Tissot, 1886-1894.

Epiphany 6, Christ Healing a Leper, Rembrandt, 1657-60.

Epiphany 2021

The Feast of the Epiphany (January 6th) we remember the wise men who came from the East (Matthew 2:1-12) bearing gifts for Jesus, born king of the Jews. Reading this scripture with fresh eyes, we might wonder as did twelfth Century French abbot, Bernard of Clairvaux, “How have wise men become such fools as to adore a child, whose age and whose relations' poverty alike deserve contempt?” A baby born to an unwed mother, lying in a manger among animals, and adored as a king? We join these kings as fools—as people who follow Jesus who a man and yet God and who calls us to serve the meek and lowly.

In the Sundays of Epiphany we hear how God is revealed in this world. The first and last readings we hear the words ““You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 4:11) and “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (Mark 9:7). Listen to the stories in the gospel of Mark. Through them we come to know Jesus, God’s son, who loves us intimately. Jesus heals our pain and restores us to new life so that we can follow him.

In this season, look for the light of Christ. Take bold steps, as did the magi more than two thousand years ago, to follow the star to our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Become a fool so that you may become wise.

This booklet begins with a home blessing to invite the presence of Jesus in your home and continues with the collects and gospel readings for this Epiphany season. Following each reading is a question to consider.

A Home Blessing at Epiphany

Epiphany is a traditional day to bless your home, inviting Jesus to be revealed in our daily lives. The prayers ask God's blessing on your home and all who live and visit there. As part of the prayers, we mark the doorways with the initials of the legendary names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. They are marked in chalk and framed by the numbers of the new year, 2021, as shown below. Because the names of the Wise Men are legendary, it has also been said that "CMB" stands for Christe, Mansionem Benedicat which in Latin for Christ, bless this house.

The prayers ask God's blessing on your home and all who live and visit there.

Leader Peace be with this house and with all who live here.

All Blessed be God forever.

The following is said as each character is marked on the door.

20 + CMB + 21

"The three Wise Men..."

C

"Caspar..."

M

"Melchior..."

B

"and Balthasar followed the star of God's Son who became man..."

20

"two thousand..."

21

"and twenty-one years ago."

+

"May Christ bless our home..."

+

"and remain with us throughout the new year."

Sprinkle holy water on the threshold and the inside entrance of the home.

Leader Gracious God, you sent your son, Jesus, to become like us, so that we might become like him. Let us now pray that Jesus will enter our home and bless it with his presence. May he always be here among us; may he nurture our love for each other, share in our joys, and comfort us in our sorrows. Inspired by his teachings and example, let us make our home a dwelling place of love, which spreads far and wide the goodness of Christ. It is in his name that we pray. Amen.

This family liturgy is adapted from the book *To Dance with God: Family Ritual and Community Celebration* by Gertrud Meuller Nelson (Paulist Press, 1986).

Epiphany (January 6)

Collect

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Matthew 2:1-12 The Visit of the Wise Men

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "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." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"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."

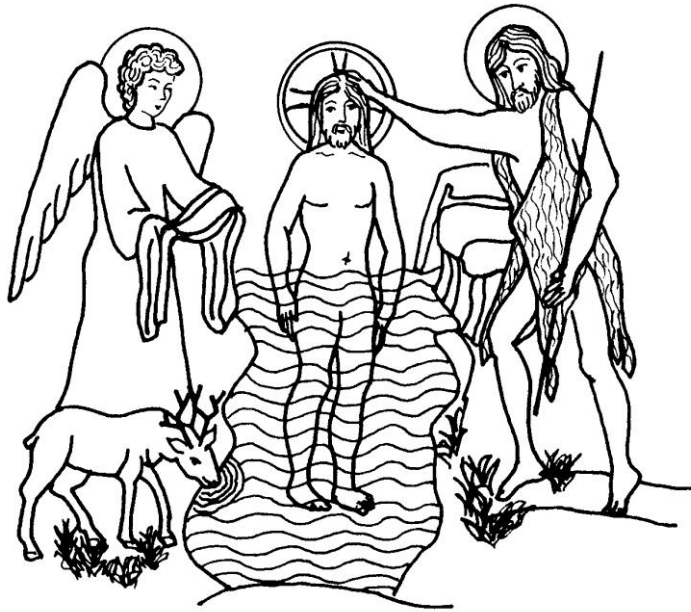
Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, 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. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

As followers of Jesus we bear God's gifts to the world. What gifts will you offer the Christ child?

Epiphany 1 (January 10)

Collect

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.



Mark 1:4-11 Jesus is Baptized

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

These words "You are my... Beloved; with you I am well pleased" are the basis of our understanding of our own baptism and ministry in the world as the body of Christ. What can you do this week to share your belovedness as a child of God?

Epiphany 2 (January 17)

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



John 1:43-51 Jesus Calls Philip

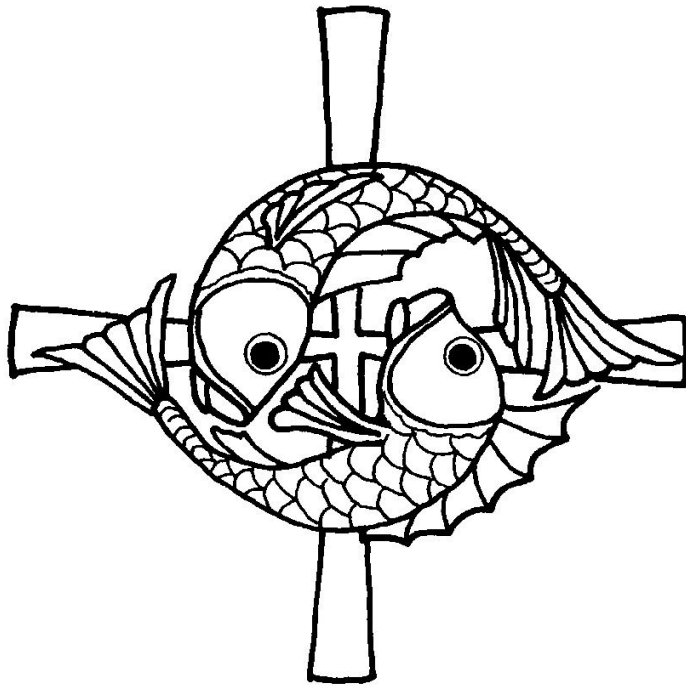
The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Just as Jesus called Philip to follow him, Jesus calls us to be disciples. Read the baptismal promises on page 304 of the Book of Common Prayer. Which promise(s) will you fulfill this week?

Epiphany 3 (January 24)

Collect

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Mark 1:14-20 Jesus Calls Simon and Andrew

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-- for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

James and John left their family and livelihood to become followers of Jesus. Might there be something you must leave behind so that you too can follow?

Epiphany 4 (January 31)

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Mark 1:21-28 Jesus Teaches with Authority

Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching-- with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The words "authority" and "authentic" share the same Greek root word authentikos meaning being one's self. Each of us is made in the image of God. And God desires that we live as God has made us. What does it mean for you to live with authority? What does God desire of you?

Epiphany 5 (February 7)

Collect

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Mark 1:29-39 Jesus Heals Simon's Mother-in-law

Jesus left the synagogue at Capernaum, and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

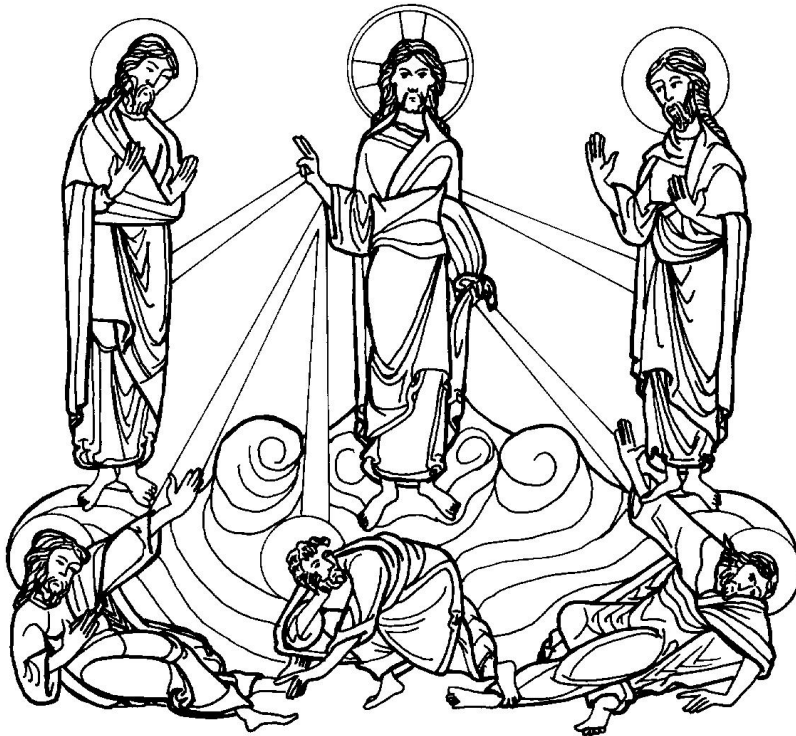
In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Immediately after being healed, Simon's mother-in-law served Jesus, James, and John. What sign of gratitude can you offer for grace in your life?

Epiphany 5 (February 14)

Collect

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Mark 9:2-9 The Transfiguration

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Each Sunday we gather on the mountain top to praise God and so that we can understand more clearly what it means to follow Jesus, God's only Son. Take a moment and give thanks to the many ways that God is revealed in your life.