

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

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### CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Church:** 905-685-8294, Fax 905-685-7661, [www.christlutheransc.ca](http://www.christlutheransc.ca)

**Pastor:** Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) [pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com](mailto:pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com)

**Parish Assistant:** Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579), [parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca)

**Business Manager:** Karen McCumber, [business.manager@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:business.manager@christlutheransc.ca)

**Secretary:** Pat Kimpel, [secretary@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:secretary@christlutheransc.ca)

**SOUL Ministry:** Trinda Rensen, Gillian Leaver

**Church Office Hours:** Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC](http://www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC)

**Bulletin by email:** Judy Mason, [chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca)

**BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Please send to [secretary@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:secretary@christlutheransc.ca).

Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

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### THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

**Prayer:** O God, by the leading star You once made known to all nations Your only-begotten Son; now lead us, who know You by faith, to know in heaven the fullness of Your divine goodness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**10 a.m.** (Service printed at back of bulletin)

**Musician:** Sarah Egert

**Readers:** Daniel Figueroa      Nick Hoeffs

#### **New Year 2021**

The Sundays in January 2021 during our provincial lockdown will be offered via live-stream on our Christ Lutheran Church Facebook page as 10 AM Blended Worship services. More details and communication will be forthcoming in the days and weeks ahead.

#### **DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:**

Monday: 1 John 12: 1-10

Wed.: John 12: 35-43

Friday: Luke 12: 35-40

Tuesday: Rev. 12: 1-6

Thurs: John 12: 44-50

Saturday: Isa. 43: 1-7

Christmas Day Story: <https://youtu.be/myQCTHNp0R4>

Precious Moments: <https://youtu.be/k-oLAqNALtE>

Children’s Message for the Epiphany: <https://youtu.be/EB5JzdhgPwg>

#### **Last Sunday Attendance: Dec. 27th -- 10 a.m.- 9**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ / (-)</u>
Current:	272,115.00	5,232.98	4,833.00	193,704.59	(78,410.41)
Missions	20,000.00	384.62	667.00	18,640.16	(1,197.84)
Property Improvement			195.00	5,448.16	

(new figures not available at printing)

### **SUPPORTING YOUR CHURCH DURING THE PANDEMIC: 1. THROUGH EFT DONATIONS:**

Some members are hesitant to return to in-person worship during these uncertain times, it's important for members to keep in mind that expenses for payroll, utilities, maintenance, etc. continue to accumulate. We have an awesome tool available to us in the form of EFT donations. Lutheran Church - Canada, East District Corporation continues to facilitate this service for us. To assist you in continuing your financial support to your church, we encourage you to fill out the form that is available for printing on Christ's website, (PDF form under "Coming Events" tab -->"Bulletin Board" tab --> LCC-ED-EFT Authorization Form-Parishioner) or follow the link: [http://christlutheransc.ca/?page\\_id=96](http://christlutheransc.ca/?page_id=96) and then mail the form along with a voided cheque to:

Lutheran Church - Canada, East District Corporation,  
275 Lawrence Ave.,  
Kitchener, ON N2M 1Y3  
Attn: Darryll Holland

### **2. BY MAIL: cheques can still be mailed to:**

Christ Lutheran Church,  
140 Russell Ave.  
St.Catharines, ON L2R 1W1

or dropped in the Church mailbox at the East entrance.

**3. ONLINE VIA LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA:** Lutheran Church-Canada has opened a web portal that allows parishioners to donate directly to their home church. Just visit LCC's website: [www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca](http://www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca) and click on the "Support My Home Congregation with Online Donations", select "St. Catharines-Christ Lutheran-30950" from the drop down menu, enter the amount of your donations and LCC will transfer your donation to Christ. Donation is via VISA or Mastercard. Tax receipts will be issued by LCC (not Christ). This opportunity will be in effect until the COVID-19 emergency is over.

### **KAREEM & FAMILY REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP UPDATE:**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, FROM YOUR REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE:

Awesome good news! We had a meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to review the Sponsorship forms for Canadian Lutheran World Relief and by December 8<sup>th</sup> our government in Ottawa acknowledged the receipt of the application for our refugee family and was accepted in good order. A lot of work went into this by Jennifer Ardon and Muna Al-Nidawi at Canadian Lutheran World Relief. We had to have Arabic and Greek ID and other information translated to go with the applications sent by CLWR. The documents CLWR needed us to sign were completed and submitted for the process. Our committee met on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to review the forms and discuss how we would proceed to prepare for the family when they arrive. Ottawa will now be sending the applications overseas for final processing. We have no idea how long that will be especially in this covid time. However, as of Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> CLWR had no spots available for refugee applicants, but by Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup> they had received notice from the Canadian government that they had 4 spots for applications open. Jennifer acted quickly and got our application in on Monday and by Tuesday Ottawa acknowledge the applications were in good form and would sent on to their overseas office for processing. **This my dear brothers and sisters in Christ is because of your many prayers offered to our Almighty and gracious God through our Saviour Jesus the Christ.** Please continue to press forward in prayer that the Lord would guide the hand of our government officials to bring Kareem and his wife Haimida, and little boys Ameer and Asser to safety here among us. As of November 23<sup>rd</sup> we had raised \$3,650 towards our goal. Remember not to neglect our other ministry needs and commitments as you or your friends donate to this outreach opportunity. I am confident the Lord will provide you with the resources to help support this mission outreach to Kareem and his family. God bless, Pastor John, 289-407-7662

**The Lutheran Hour:** Hear God's Word at the click of a button on Lutheran Hour webpage or on their super convenient app! *(Just hold your "Ctrl" button down and clickbox to follow the link)*

[LISTEN NOW >>](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE APP >>](#)

LHM—all info.—[www.lhmcanada.org](http://www.lhmcanada.org)

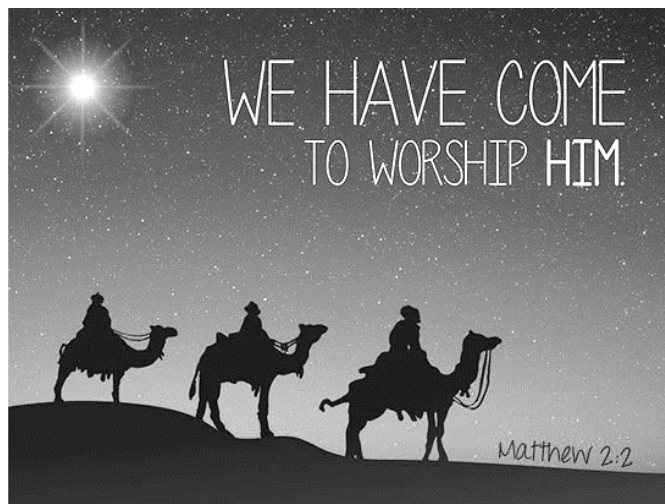
**LISTEN TO THE LUTHERAN HOUR:** tune in to **WDCX 99.5FM or 970AM.**

**Sunday, January 10th: "The Backstory Behind a Bible 'Contradiction'** Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

When you open yourself up to hearing the backstory behind the apparent contradiction, you may encounter what the Bible is all about. (Mark 2:13-28) The Canadian sermons are available for listening on-line on LLL website ([www.ill.ca/radio-tv-and-podcasts](http://www.ill.ca/radio-tv-and-podcasts))

# CAROL SERVICE OF THE WORD

*Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Creative Worship Materials*



## THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

FIRST SONG

*"Angels From The Realms Of Glory"*

*LSB # 367 VS 1, 3 & 5*

- 1. Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
You who sang creation's story  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**
  
- 2. Sages, leave your contemplations,  
Brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great Desire of nations;  
Ye have seen His natal star.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**
  
- 3. Though an Infant now we view Him,  
He shall fill His Father's throne,  
Gather all the nations to Him;  
Every knee shall then bow down:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

INVOCATION, CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

This is the day which the Lord has made:

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

From the rising of the sun to its setting,

**the name of the Lord is to be praised.**

Let us go unto the altar of our God;

**to God, our exceeding joy.**

Let us then confess our sins to God our merciful Father:

*[Brief prayerful silence]*

**Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all people, we admit and confess our sinfulness. We have turned away from You and from each other, in our speaking thinking and doing. We have done the evil You forbid and have not done the good You desire. We do repent and are truly sorry for these our sins. Have mercy on us, kind Father, because of the holy obedience of Your Son, our Lord and Brother, Jesus Christ. Forgive us all that is past and with the help of the Holy spirit, move us to serve You faithfully. Set our feet I of your upon the new path of life, and build Your Kingdom here through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

God has promised forgiveness of sins to all who repent and turn to Him in faith. In the place of Christ and by His Holy Command, I therefore forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

SPOKEN KYRIE

**O Lord, have mercy on us; O Christ, have mercy on us; O Lord, have mercy on us and grant us Your peace. Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

*"Hark! The Herald Angels"*

**Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born King.**

**Peace on earth and mercy mild**

**God and sinners reconciled**

**Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies**

**With the-angelic host proclaim**

**"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

**Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!**

## GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you:

**And also with you.**

Let us pray: Eternal God, You led the wise men by the shining of a star to adore Your only Son, the new-born King. Guide all of the nations by His light, so that the whole world sees Your glory. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## THE WORD

**The Old Testament** *Isaiah 60: 1-6*

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. 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 proclaim the praise of the Lord.

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

**The Epistle:** *Ephesians 3:1-12*

[St. Paul writes:] This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our

Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SUNG GOSPEL VERSE                    *"Good Christian Friends"*

**Good Christian friends rejoice, with heart and soul and voice.  
Now you need not fear the grave, Jesus Christ was born to save.  
He has opened Heaven's door and we are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!**

**The Holy Gospel**    *St. Matthew 2: 1-12*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter:

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

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. This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess the faith.

**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.**

## GOSPEL SONG

*"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"*

LSB # 374

### **1. Gentle Mary laid her Child**

**Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the undefiled,  
To the world a Stranger:  
Such a Babe in such a place,  
Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race  
Who have found His favor.**

**2. Angels sang about His birth;  
Wise men sought and found Him;  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth,  
Glory all around Him:  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,  
Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night,  
All the hills were ringing.**

**3. Gentle Mary laid her Child  
Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the undefiled,  
But no more a stranger:  
Son of God, of humble birth,  
Beautiful the story;  
Praise His Name in all the earth,  
Hail the King of glory!**

## MESSAGE

### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Your light has dawned upon us, great God, and we are drawn to Your light as a people of faith who trust Your mercy to answer the prayers of Your people with grace sufficient for all our needs.

From distant lands and far-off places, You have gathered to Yourself a people to wear Your name and live in the light of Your Word. Bless Your Church, where she struggles to survive and where she labors to keep up with all the growth, that we may be united in teaching and service, live in harmony and peace, and work together that those still in darkness and death may be brought into the light of Christ.

Lord, in Your Epiphany light, **shine on us and hear us, we pray.**

Leaders and governments rise and fall, but Your Word endures forever. Give to all our political leaders wisdom sufficient for their task, that they may keep the sacred trust placed in them and serve the common good.

Lord, in Your Epiphany light, **shine on us and hear us, we pray.**

Through Your Word, You have made known the mystery of Christ and given redemption to all people through Baptism and faith. Guide those who preach and teach Your Word to us, and give them a loving heart to shepherd Your people faithfully. Bless all church workers and lay people who serve You.

Lord, in Your Epiphany light, **shine on us and hear us, we pray.**

By Your mercy, we are preserved in time of trouble and sustained in illness, even to death. Bless the sick and those troubled in mind and heart, and grant them healing according to Your will. Encourage the grieving with hope, and comfort the dying in their last hours. *[Especially do we pray for \_\_\_\_\_.]*

Lord, in Your Epiphany light, **shine on us and hear us, we pray.**

You have supplied Your people with many and rich resources with which to support the work of Your Church. Give to the missionaries and those witnessing to Your Gospel message here and throughout the world all things needful, that Your saving purpose in Christ may be realized and Your Word may bring many into the fellowship of Your Church. Accept, we pray, the offerings we bring, that through these treasures Your work may not be hindered by any lack or need.

Lord, in Your Epiphany light, **shine on us and hear us, we pray.**



Holy Lord, mighty God, You have shown to us the face of Your mercy in Your Son, through whom those of all nations may find unity and life. Hear the prayers of Your people, and grant all that is needful to us and to those for whom we have prayed, that trusting in Your mercy our hearts may find perfect peace and rest in Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**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**

#### BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord upon you with favour, + and give you peace.

**Amen.**

#### SENDING SONG

*"As With Gladness"*

*LSB # 397*

**As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold,  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led to Thee.**

**1. As with joyful steps they sped  
Saviour to Thy lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before  
Him whom heav'n and earth adore;  
So may we, with willing feet,  
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.**

**2. As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King.**

**3. Holy Jesus, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all who gather for worship this day. We trust 2021 will be filled with peace and hope and that our season of Epiphany, with the Light of Christ shining brightly into every corner of the world, may guide all of you on your faith journey.

**REV. TODD HOEFFS**

**EPIPHANY**

**Scripture: St. Matthew 2:1-12; Ephesians 3:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-6**

**January 3, 2021**

**F, S + HS. Amen.**

Scripture doesn't tell us their names.

We don't know where exactly they were from. Just from the east. Could be Babylon, Persia, Syria, India, Asia.

We don't know exactly how many there were. Three gifts suggest three visitors, but maybe they travelled in an extensive entourage. No one travelled alone in ancient days, especially if the journey involved thousands of miles.

And we don't even know if these people were kings. Some think so, based on the words we heard from Isaiah today. The biblical word is MAGI – Magicians, Sorcerers, Wise soothsayers. Most likely astronomers or astrologers, given their fascination and understanding with the star.

When they arrived, Jesus was no longer an infant, maybe 2 years old. Mary sits with Him on her lap, but Joseph isn't mentioned.

Strange. Considering men had prominence in a household. And a Jewish woman wouldn't have a group of Gentile men in her home alone in those days.

We don't know how the wise magi knew how important this star had been.... that this star was HIS star, the one born king of the Jews.

A miracle of faith often overlooked. Had the Jew carted off into captivity in Babylon hundreds of years earlier taught the locals something about the promised Saviour of the world?!

Perhaps THEY ALL knew something we don't. That this was all part of God's plan, just meant to be.

This story, such a treasured part of the Christmas story, illustrated in cards and sung in carols and sculpted in nativity scenes, we simply don't know much about. But this we know, beyond a shadow of a doubt: God wanted them there. God wanted them to be among the first to see His Son in human flesh.

And He wanted them there so much that He used some pretty extraordinary means to get them there. A star to guide them - first to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem. A wicked and paranoid king to point them to a town they'd never have looked in. And chief priests and scribes who would later, like Herod, not only try to kill this son, but succeed.

And so it happened. A most unlikely collusion. The angels who had announced this birth to Mary and to Joseph and to the shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night (Luke 2:8) brought Jesus to His own people who would welcome Him. For the others, God used other means . . . and no less impressive or magical.

GOD wanted them there. And not just the Magi. But Gentiles.

Folks who were not Jewish. He wanted rich and poor, high and low, Jews and Gentiles, there and worshiping His Son, Who came NOT only as the King of the Jews, but the King of all people.

And He wants you, too. And so He has brought you here.

**And if you think it's not the same, it truly IS very much the same.** For like the star, some thing or some event in your life worked to bring you here. Like Herod, an unlikely person pointed you in this faith direction. Like the chief priests and scribes, some one spoke the Word of God to you. God has worked through earthly things to bring you all here. HE wants you here.

The apostle Paul says that he himself was one of those unlikely people God used to bring others to His Son. Paul - who hated Christ and Christians and the Church more than anyone, who couldn't persecute, imprison, and kill them fast enough - God used him to bring people to Jesus. Paul, who as we heard him say today, calls himself **the very least of all the saints**. God wanted him. God brought him. God used him.

And however He did it, God wanted you and brought you here as well. And He revealed to you your Saviour, that you too fall down and worship Him and receive gifts far more than you could ever bring Him. For while **gold, frankincense, and myrrh** have great value in our world, the gift this child has come to give has far greater value. Value for both this life and eternal life. For the gift He gives is Himself. To you.

The Wise Men no doubt saw a very meagre, ordinary home when they peeked in the door to see Jesus. No throne, no angel host, nothing to suggest royalty or specialness. They saw a child that looked just like any other child, or perhaps a child even poorer than most and less likely to be a king. They could have looked at Him and said: What? Who? That? Him? No! Pardon us. We must have the wrong house.

But they believed the Word that had been spoken to them concerning a certain star and a certain child. And they fell down and worshiped Him.

**And how very much the same for us.** For the gifts God uses here, too, don't look very royal or special. Water in a font that creates children of God. Words that forgive sins. Bread and wine that carries the Body and Blood of Jesus to your lips.

The SAME Word spoken to you gives you too the faith to believe. To fall down and worship not water, words, and bread and wine, but the One Who comes to us in them as humbly as He came in the human flesh the Wise Men set their eyes on.

**Jesus is Not offended by how He comes to us.**

How remarkable a statement is that? Our God comes to us who ruined His world, who rebelled against Him and continue to rebel. The ones who often think He should do things differently, that the truth should be different, that He should be different? That God should love us differently? That we deserve better from Him?

We who love our stuff more than we love God. Who value His name that He put on us so little that sometimes we don't even want others to know we're Christians. Who think so little of His Word that it doesn't even make it off our shelves during the week, and allow the things of this world to keep us away from church on Sundays. Who value life so little that we hate to be inconvenienced by others. Who think buying and getting and keeping is far more important than giving and sharing. We are the people who don't deserve to have God come to us. Who don't deserve a star or a Word or a Saviour.

*BUT* He still came. When you recognize yourself as unworthy then you see how Jesus truly came **for you**. And He came in the only way He could in order not to destroy us with His glory. He came as a child born to die, that a world of men and women who die might then rise to life again. He came poor for the poor, lowly for the lowly, and became a sinner for sinners. That the poor might become rich in Him. That the lowly be exalted in Him. That sinners become saints in Him. That we rebellious fools become Wise Men, in Him.

**HE who came for you wants you here with Him.** He who knows your name and everything about you - everything you keep secret and hidden from everyone else, He knows. And He wants you because He knows it all. Because He wants to forgive you over and over and over. His gift of freedom sets you on the faith journey to breath in the Spirit's reviving breath. Jesus is life. He's your strength in weakness, your hope when everything seems hopeless, your confidence when all looks lost, your love in a world of hate. And it matters now where others are from or who they are because your faith tells you to welcome wide the other, the stranger, the rebel, so they, too, may fall down and worship the King.

And our child King wants you to be with Him in Heaven, too. And shares Heaven with you on earth in the church, in the peace, in the joy, in the worship, in the faith journey. It might not be as awe inspiring as an angel messenger, or a star, or a wicked king, but the impact is the same. To fall down in faith and worship the newborn Saviour. Receive Him who comes to you now in the same Body and Blood the Wise Men fell down before and worshiped. For by so doing, you too, are Wise indeed.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

