

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

January 2nd, 2022
10 a.m. Blended Service



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294 Fax 905-685-7661

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
Business Manager: Karen McCumber business.manager@christlutheransc.ca
Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

Prayer: O God, by the leading of a 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 diving goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Organist: Louise Gondosch
Reader: Paul Mason

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: 1 Thess. 5: 5-11 Wed.: 1 John 2: 7-11 Friday: John 3: 16-21
Tuesday: Eph. 5: 8-14 Thurs: 1 John 1:5-10 Saturday: 1 John 2: 12-17

WORSHIP NOTE:

- A recording of Sunday’s service will be uploaded to YouTube – “Gathering the Scattered” at: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3a4p6prdJGEyP5S-q-cNSg>).
- A PDF version of the order of service for each Sunday will also be posted on our church website: christlutheransc.ca.
- Archived videos of Sunday’s service will be uploaded to christlutheransc.ca – “Worship” page.

Any questions or concerns, please check out our church website (<http://christlutheransc.ca/>), contact Judy Slingerland (chairman.worship@christlutheransc.ca) or Pastor Todd (pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com). or phone the church office. May the peace of the risen Lord be with you all.

EDUCATION HOUR will resume in late January for Sunday school and Bible Study. Youth Catechism will resume in February and March 2022. More information still to come.

VACATION: Pastor Todd is taking time off with his family December 27, 2021 — January 8, 2022. Pastor John Makey will be leading the service on January 2, a 10 AM blended service.

- In the event of emergency can reach Pastor Todd at: pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com
- or contact Pastor John Makey directly: 289-407-7662.

Peace to all & have a joyful & healthy 2022.

CHRISTMAS TREE AND DECORATIONS TAKE DOWN: Saturday, January 8th at 4 p.m.
Supper will be held at 6 p.m. at Northern Flame Grill, 312 Lake Street.
A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex for those who wish to attend.

LUTHERAN CHURCH - CANADA NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING:

Lutheran Young people from across Canada will be gathering together **July 15-19, 2022 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.** The theme for the gathering is "IN NOT OF" from Philippians 3:20 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ." Information packages are available from Louise. Save the date, check out the website at <http://www.lccnyg.ca>, start following the Facebook and Instagram pages and check out this fun announcement from Pastor Glenn Worcester <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68gXVYofMY>

THANK YOU to all who donated to “Operation Christmas Cheer”. We were able to deliver 27 Christmas Baskets to those in need. A big "thank you" to Howard and Wally Bogusat who did all the shopping and assembling and of course to all who donated the funds needed to buy the meals.

Right Now Media resources at www.rightnowmedia.org.

- Children's videos such as "The Story of Christmas", a 25 minute video that helps children laugh, wonder, and rejoice as they learn of God's love for the world in the gift of baby Jesus.
- Confirmants will find a Playmobil animation video on Martin Luther
- Sports enthusiasts will receive encouragement from Christian athletes such as Tim Tebow.

There are hundreds of other Videos and Bible Studies for children, youth and adults by presenters such as Francis Chan, John Piper, Kyle Idleman, Jeanie Allen, Max Lucado, Bianca Juarez Olthoff and many others. If you need login assistance contact Louise.

2022 DONATION ENVELOPES are available for pick up in your mailbox. If you don't have a mailbox, please check the table at the entrance to the sanctuary. If you have not been issued envelopes and would like some, or, you would like to be assigned a mailbox, please contact Karen at: business.manager@christlutheransc.ca or the office at 905-685-8294.

A HUGE THANK YOU to all who helped in any way with our 2021 Bazaar. In addition to those who made all the items for sale, we so greatly appreciated the many of you who placed orders or made donations. It is the way we earn money to donate to Missions, so we are thrilled to announce that this year we raised \$5,657.35. Those earnings came from the orders that were placed, the 2 days of the Craft Tables downstairs, and some donations. Along with that, the Silent Auction that Judy Mason ran online, raised \$1,391.00 giving us a grand total of \$7,262.77. We are so pleased and extremely grateful. Thanks be to God! At our LWML meeting in January, we will have the pleasure of "giving it all away", as we choose amounts and the various Missions to donate it to. Thank you again for your help and support. Carole Pink

May Jesus' light shine on you and renew your spirit in 2022!

LWMLC/MARY MARTHA SOCIETY is pleased to invite all the women of the congregation to any or all of the following evenings. We look forward to the time when health and safety protocols will not be necessary, however, until that time, any public health Covid protocols will be in place for all of our meetings. The following is our program (subject to changes) until June:

- Jan. 18th: 7 pm: - Devotion, Decision on distribution of funds from our bazaar, Making and sending Valentine Cards
- Feb. 15th: 7 pm: - Bible Study with Pastor Hoeffs
- March 15th: 7 pm: - Speaker
- April 19th: 7 pm: - Quilt Tying/Stamp Trimming
- May 17th: 7 pm: - Bible Study
- June 22nd: 5:30 pm:- End of season Social and Dinner

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Is. 40:31

LWML-Canada, Ontario District, Niagara Zone, is hosting our District Convention in St. Catharines at Grace Lutheran Church (accommodation at Niagara College) on June 9 and 10, 2022. More details will follow. If at all possible, please plan to attend. It is a wonderful time to get to know and renew friendships with our sisters in Christ from around the province! It is a time to focus on

"Joy, Patience, Prayer" which is the theme of the Convention. (Romans 12:12)

Our Seminary Student Eduardo Farias and his wife Daniella will be our wonderful entertainment for Saturday evening!

SUPPORTING YOUR CHURCH DURING THE PANDEMIC: It's important for members to keep in mind that expenses for payroll, utilities, maintenance, etc. continue to accumulate even when you are not comfortable attending service.

1. THROUGH 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 at: 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: Darryl 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:

<https://lutheranchurch-canada.tng-secure.com/?pageld=donation-edit&categoryld=10972>

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.

CAROL SERVICE OF THE WORD

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Creative Worship Materials

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

January 2, 2022

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 new born 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 2nd 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

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|---|--|
| <p>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.</p> | <p>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.</p> |
|---|--|

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 2022 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.

Christ Lutheran Church
January 2, 2022
Rev. John Makey
THEME: The Star of Bethlehem
TEXT: Matthew 2:1-12

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ "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 shepherd my people Israel."^[b]

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ 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, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

"On The twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me twelve drummers drumming ... and a partridge in a pear tree." You may get tired of this song with its run on lyrics, but it's one of the few reminders we still have of an earlier time and another place, when life was lived at a more leisurely pace and Christians began their celebration of the birth of Christ, not with the department store sales the day after Halloween, but with the midnight service on Christmas Eve. The celebration lasted, not for a countdown of the days left to shop, but for a full 12 days and 12 nights until it reached its climax on the Feast of our Lord's Epiphany on January 6th.

Epiphany is more than just a day in our church calendar; it is a whole season, a whole season in which we celebrate as the Epiphany Hymn puts it: **"God in man made manifest"**. For 12 days we celebrate the gift, God's giving of his gift His only begotten Son. Now, we take time to meditate on the meaning of that gift and the many ways in which we have come to know it. This is what Epiphany means: **"a making know", "making evident", "showing God's great love for His creation and His greatest of all gift to it"**. What better symbol can there be to represent and present the Epiphany of our Lord than **"the star"**.

How many times have you stood under the night sky and looked up in wonder and awe at the stars too numerous to count? And then there are the stars that scientists tell us that we haven't even seen yet, but are still out there. This reminds us of the things about Jesus that God has shown and told us about in the Bible. The things that our human minds cannot grasp or see on this side of heaven about the babe of Bethlehem and the Christ of the Cross. There are things that we will see and understand more fully once we are eternally in heaven. It is then we will celebrate Epiphany in the truest and best sense of what it is all about.

Our celebration of the Epiphany season begins on January 6th marked by the wisemen coming to the house in Bethlehem to worship the baby Messiah. How did they know about this baby? They didn't have the same first hand messenger of heavenly hosts sent to the shepherds out in the field. The sign to the wisemen was a star. ***His star***, as specifically stated in our Gospel lesson. As they searched for meaning about the star they probably would have used God's Word from the Old Testament Scriptures, especially a book like Daniel to tell them what the star was all about. Evidence seems to point to these wisemen being from Babylon, where the people of Judah had been exiled 500 years before. This is where Daniel was so influential, and a number of the books of the Old Testament would have been read by men of such learning. These men are called magi in Matthew, or wisemen, they were not kings in the sense of rulers that the Christmas Carol we are familiar with seems to portray. We really do not know anything about them not even how many of them there were, only that they had 3 gifts.

However, what we do know is that they were "***magi***", they recognized "***the King of the Jews had been born***", and they saw "***His star in the east***". The star told them Jesus was "***king of the Jews***", and His star "went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was". His star told them about Jesus and showed them where He was. That's a good summary of what Epiphany is all about "***to show us God made man***", God who came to be our Savior.

The wisemen told Herod: "***we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.***" They came as God's representatives for the Gentiles, like you and me, to adore the Messiah. This is in much contrast to King Herod's motives which were to seek the child out to murder him, to get rid of him. When you think about it, this is all first and third command stuff we talking about here. "***You shall have no other gods before me, and Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.***" In this day and age we have all kinds of stars that lead us away from the one true God and what He has done for us. There are movie stars, TV stars, music stars, and sports stars to name just a few. These stars lead us to follow and worship other gods. These stars lead us to use our time, talents, treasures, and energy to follow the desires of our sinful hearts and the way of the world. The true star and light of the world, Jesus the Christ, the Messiah and Saviour of the world is so often crowded out of our lives by everything else these other human stars stand for: greed, self-gratification, wealth, self-importance, excitement, and a way to gain approval of family and friends. All of these things you and I live with every day. Do you even take time to stop and think about whom you are worshipping, whom or what you are adoring? Do you allow the false stars show you

and lead you to the life and truth the world has to offer? Do you allow these stars to outshine the Bethlehem star?

The wisemen didn't! They had very little to go on, but they looked to God's Word and faithfully followed the star God had placed in the heavens to lead them to the star of their

lives. They brought for the King of the Jew, the baby Messiah, gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The ancient and traditional thought of the Christian Church see these gifts as symbols of the person and work of the baby Jesus. The gift of gold for a King. The gift of frankincense for Jesus being God, and the gift of myrrh for the baby being destined to die as a sacrifice. These gifts mirror Scripture's description of Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King. As prophet Jesus was God and spoke for God. As King Jesus is the king of creation and ruler of the universe. He is the king God promised King David that his lineage would reign forever. As priest Jesus made the perfect sacrifice, Himself, to redeem us from sin, death and hell. The Bethlehem baby, became the Bethlehem star in every sense of the word as our Prophet, Priest, and King. He is a star who is the **"light of the world"**, not only showing God's love, but showering God's love upon us.

This light lit up our lives when the Holy Spirit placed **saving faith** in Jesus Christ as God's redeeming Son in our hearts. This light came to make you and me sons and daughters of God. Despite the fear and fighting in this world the light still shines. Joy shines though our pain and suffering because the light of Christ dwells within us. This is why we gather in the presence of God to worship Him. For we, as the wisemen of old, have seen the **"Star of Bethlehem"**. The light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Epiphany is truly the twelfth day of Christmas, and **our true Love** has made us His sons and daughters. Amen.

MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL HUMAN UNDERSTANDING KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS, OUR BETHLEHEM STAR.
AMEN.