



ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



The Epiphany of Our Lord

January 6, 2022



Jesus Appears as the Savior of the Nations

The Epiphany of Our Lord focuses on the Magi's visit to the Christ Child. In that respect, it is a "Thirteenth Day" of Christmas, the Gentile Christmas. It also marks the beginning of a new season of the Church Year. While Christmas has focused on the Incarnation of our Lord – that is, on God becoming flesh – the season of Epiphany emphasizes the manifestation or self-revelation of God in that same flesh of Christ. The Lord himself has entered our darkness and rises upon us with the brightness of his true light. He does so chiefly by his Word of the Gospel, which he causes to be preached within his Church on earth, not only to the Jews, but also to Gentiles. As the Magi were guided by the promises of Holy Scripture to find and worship the Christ Child with his mother in the house, so does he call disciples from all nations by the preaching of his Word, to find in his Word and Sacraments, receive his love, and worship him.

The Propers

The Propers are those portions of the service that change (or, are "proper" to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means "regular order") portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord's Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.

First Lesson 1 Kings 10:1-9

A queen from Africa visits King Solomon and comes to learn of the eternal love that the Lord has for all people.

Second Lesson¹ Acts 13:46-49

Even in the face of persecution, love led the apostles to boldly proclaim the message of the risen Christ. Filled with joy and the Spirit, Christ's love compels us to proclaim the same Word of Life.

Gospel of the Day¹ Matthew 2:1-12

So long on the outside, looking in, the nations of the earth had viewed the glory of the Lord with a sense of mystery and awe while all but a faithful few in the chosen nation of Israel forsook and dishonored the God of the covenant. Yet, in the Lord's faithfulness, the promise is fulfilled as the Savior is born. The heralding star beckons the Magi to come and worship the King. Others wish to come for the purposes of evil. But the power of the Most High protects the Hope of Nations in his mother's arms. We offer our best in response to the greatest treasure – salvation in Christ.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 72

This psalm shows us Jesus revealed as the King, the royal Savior worthy of the Epiphany gifts offered to him. The Savior has come for all nations. All nations are blessed through him. We are part of "all nations" and so we praise the Lord for including us in his plan of salvation.

Verse of the Day

Matthew 2:2

“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.” The heralding star beckoned the Magi to the Christ Child. The wise men worshiped the young Jesus as the promised Messiah, fulfilling the prophecies that Gentiles would come to Jesus and proclaim him as Savior of the world.

Prayer of the Day

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.

Hymn of the Day

79 “How Lovely Shines the Morning Star” (Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608)

Often referred to as “the queen of chorales,” this hymn was written by Philip Nicolai in 1597 during the Pestilence of the Black Plague. It became at once a favorite in Germany, was considered indispensable at weddings, was often sung around death beds, and often sounded by city chimes.

Church Year Season²

Epiphany

The twelve days of Christmas culminate at the celebration of the Epiphany of our Lord on January 6th. The season of Epiphany highlights the appearance of the Son of God as the Savior of the whole world— both Jew and Gentile. God revealed the mystery of his person and his mission through the words and works of the Father, through the anointing and empowering of the Spirit, and through the preaching and miracles of Christ.

This season of the Savior’s appearance is bracketed by two white Sundays: The Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration of Our Lord. Since he had come hidden in flesh, recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God required revelation. From John’s Baptism to the Father’s booming voice, God revealed the truth about Jesus to the world: this son of Mary is the Son of God, come as the Christ. The Father’s testimony about Jesus bookends the season. From the glory of his baptism at the beginning of his ministry to the glory of his transfiguration at its culmination, the voice of the Father declares what flesh had hidden from the world: This is my Son!

Colors & Symbolism

Epiphany Day: White

White is the color of our Triune God and heaven. It also symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity and innocence. We receive these blessings through faith because Christ, our righteousness Savior, has forgiven all our sins.

Nain Paraments

Christmas

Superfrontal: “Immanuel” is Hebrew for “God with us.” This name for Jesus Christ was revealed to God’s people through Isaiah in a prophecy of the Savior’s birth (7:14). The angel Gabriel announced to Joseph in a dream that the child in the Virgin Mary’s womb would be that promised Immanuel – God who had come to be with us (Matthew 1:23) in order to save us. Sometimes the name is spelled *Emmanuel*, which is the Latin alphabet transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation of the same name.

The vines next to Immanuel represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God’s children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: *The Greek Cross*: distinguished by four arms of equal length.

Pulpit antependium: *The Celtic Cross*: similar to the Latin cross (†), but with a circle surrounding the center, which symbolizes the eternal nature of Christ and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him.

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author; Jonathan E. Schroeder, Editor.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author and Editor.

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